FRANZ MOLNAR'S
FASHIONS FOR MEN
AND THE SWAN

ENGLISH TEXTS BY BENJ. F. GLAZER

"**Franz Molnar** triumphs in romantic high comedy. At the end of the second of three acts the audience rose to play and players with a spontaneity and intensity of enthusiasm which have seldom been surpassed in our theatre. The hand of the master wrought firmly throughout, and every word spoken in the three hours between 8:22 and 11:20 was integral and significant. What is unique in the play is its literary art, the freshness and beauty of its characterizations, and the dramaturgic skill with which it is sustained on the level of high comedy and significant romance."—*John Corbin in N. Y. Times.*

"Was it still raining when the audience came out of the Cort Theatre after the first performance of Molnar's comedy THE SWAN. One scarcely noticed it as he came away from one of those very rare evenings in the theatre when unalloyed delight has been his unexpected portion. In THE SWAN there is no indirection, no muddy writing, no faltering in the progress of the story. Here is surely the perfect comedy of the year."—*N. Y. Telegram.*

"Read all the signposts there are in New York and you will find that, with last night's paint glistening fresh upon them, they point one and all to the Cort. For at that theatre last night a new comedy from Hungary was set forth—a silvery, delicately wrought and utterly delightful play. THE SWAN is incomparably the best work which has been done."—*Alexander Woollcott in the N. Y. Herald.*

FASHIONS FOR MEN
THE SWAN

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FASHIONS FOR MEN

AND

THE SWAN

TWO PLAYS BY

FRANZ MOLNAR
Author of "Liliom"

English Texts by Benjamin Glazer

BONI AND LIVERIGHT
PUBLISHERS NEW YORK

FASHIONS FOR MEN
THE SWAN

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BENJAMIN GLAZER, N. Y.

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

(In the order of their appearance)

Peter Juhasz ..... O. P. Heggie
Adele, his wife ..... Beth Merrill
Aristocratic Lady ..... Edythe Tressider
Oscar ..... Clarke Silvernail
Unassuming Lady ..... Frances Goodrich
Philip ..... Frank Peters
Young Gentleman ..... Fred Burton
Paula ..... Helen Gahagan
Adolf ..... George Frenger
The Count ..... Edwin Nicander
Delivery Boy ..... James Hagen
Domokos ..... George Frenger
Santha ..... Fred Burton
Mate ..... Charles Ellis
Maid ..... Sedonia Elin
Thorough Young Lady ..... Katherine Haden
Dissatisfied Lady ..... Frances Goodrich
Nervous Gentleman ..... John Rogers
Old Gentleman ..... James Hagen
Patient Lady ..... Sedonia Elin
Cabman ..... George Frenger

Staged by MR. GLAZER
Settings by SHELDON K. VIELE
Stage Manager JAMES HAGEN

Scenery painted by ROBERT W. BERGMAN
Costumes by ALINE BERNSTEIN
Act 1, built by THEODORE REISIG
Act 2, built by SAMUEL FRIEDMAN

General Manager JOHN PETER TOOHEY

FASHIONS FOR MEN

A COMEDY IN THREE ACTS

By FRANZ MOLNAR

English text by Benjamin Glazer

PERSONS

Peter Juhasz
Adele, *his wife.*
Paula
Oscar
Philip
The Count
Mate
Domokos
Santha
Adolf
A Delivery Boy
A Cabman
The Aristocratic Lady
The Unassuming Lady
The Insignificant Lady
The Dissatisfied Lady
The Patient Lady
The Thorough Young Lady
The Young Gentleman
The Old Gentleman
The Nervous Gentleman

ACT ONE

ACT ONE

SCENE—*A little shop. Down left is the display window; up left the entrance from the street; between the two a cashier's desk with a cash register upon it. There is a counter along the back wall and another along the right wall with shelves behind them and, over them, a little balcony.*

A broad space between the counters leads through an archway up right to a rear room of the establishment. Before the window down left stands a table, displaying open boxes of cravats, suspenders, ladies' girdles, colored scarfs and bottles of perfume. Near it stands a rack of walking-sticks. There are two stools in front of each counter.

It is evening. ADELE *sits behind the cashier's desk.* OSCAR *stands behind the counter at back speaking in low tones to the* UNASSUMING LADY, *who sits on a stool facing him across a heap of merchandise on the counter.* JUHASZ *stands in front of the counter at right, waiting on the* ARISTOCRATIC LADY, *who sits on one of the stools with an assortment of summer-weight material for blouses before her.*

ARISTOCRATIC LADY—If I remember rightly, Mr. Juhasz, I saw some of this on Countess Hohensperg at Tatralomnicz.

JUHASZ—That may be. I must look it up in the book. [*To* ADELE.] Tell me, dear. [*Shows her the material.*] Is this the same Agreable we sold to the Countess Hohensperg a few months ago?

ADELE—It may be. I am not sure.

OSCAR—[*To the* UNASSUMING LADY.] Excuse me, madame. [*Loudly to* JUHASZ.] Yes, the Countess Hohensperg got some of that. . . .

ARISTOCRATIC LADY—I thought so.

OSCAR—Yes, madame, this Chatterton Agreable comes in twelve different colors. The countess took five.

ARISTOCRATIC LADY—Then, of course, I can't consider it. I am really sorry to give you so much trouble, Mr. Juhasz.

JUHASZ—But it is no trouble at all.

ARISTOCRATIC LADY—You are perfectly charming, Mr. Juhasz. Just as if you had been born to cater to the caprices of women. You never lose patience——

JUHASZ—[*Clearing away the materials.*] But that's what we are here for, madame.

ARISTOCRATIC LADY—[*Rummaging through the materials.*] This is nice, but it isn't becoming to me. This is for a bigger woman . . . this for a

thinner woman . . . this is too youthful . . . and this is too old. This is nice, but it's a bit loud . . . and this is too dull. Now this is very nice indeed, but Countess Hohensperg has it. So it is out of the question.

JUHASZ—Suppose we let the Agreable go, and look at some Biarritz instead. The fact is, I consider Biarritz a much better grade. It is kept back here. Will you step this way, or shall I bring it out to you here?

ARISTOCRATIC LADY—[*Rises.*] I wouldn't think of putting you to so much trouble. You have turned out half your stock for me already. [*Turns to* ADELE.] Your wife must be impatient to go home.

ADELE—Not at all.

ARISTOCRATIC LADY—It's past seven. You are usually closed by this time.

ADELE—Oh, we are very glad to serve you. [*Points to* OSCAR.] There, you see . . . and there is still another customer in there.

OSCAR—[*Has approached* JUHASZ.] The lady heard us mention the Agreable that Countess Hohensperg——

ARISTOCRATIC LADY—Quite out of the question!

OSCAR—No, no— [*Low.*] The lady heard us talking about it [*meantime* JUHASZ *has gone over to the* UNASSUMING LADY] and wants to have a look

at it. [*Takes the material with a pitying smile.*] Thank you. She's from a different social sphere.

ARISTOCRATIC LADY—One would never believe that people could be such apes.

JUHASZ—[*In the archway.*] If you will step this way, please.

ARISTOCRATIC LADY—I shan't detain him much longer, Mrs. Juhasz. [JUHASZ *lets her pass him, then follows her off through the archway.*]

UNASSUMING LADY—I'll take this for the sixth.

OSCAR—[*Counting the patterns.*] One, two, three, four, five and the Agreable makes six.

UNASSUMING LADY—Will it take long?

OSCAR—No, indeed, madame. We know that madame goes to Lelle on the twentieth, and from there to Lake Pusztaban, and later to Post Berettyo —Saint Peter. [*The* UNASSUMING LADY *rises.*] Is there anything else I can show you? We have just got in some very beautiful girdles. [*Reaches for a box on the table.*]

UNASSUMING LADY—Thank you, but it's too late now.

OSCAR—But, madame, that's what we are here for. [*Shows her a bonnet.*] Auto bonnets . . . just arrived . . . really the newest thing of its kind.

UNASSUMING LADY—[*Takes it in her hand.*] I shall be coming in again toward the end of next week. . . . How much is this?

OSCAR—May I see? [*Looks at the tag.*] Seventy kronen.

UNASSUMING LADY—For this?

OSCAR—It's the style that costs, madame. We have some cheaper ones . . . some between forty and fifty.

UNASSUMING LADY—Thanks. . . . Next time I come, perhaps. You have my address?

OSCAR—[*Rapidly.*] Forty Nagykorona Street, first floor, apartment two.

UNASSUMING LADY—That's right. Now please see to it that my things are delivered on time. Good night.

OSCAR—[*Opens the door for her.*] You can rely on us absolutely. Thank you. Good night. [*She exits. He closes the door behind her and returns to his counter. As he speaks he clears away the materials, folds up those he sold and makes notes on the tags.*] A couple of evening stars . . . those two . . . always popping up just as we are about to close . . . and it's almost impossible to get rid of them.

ADELE—Philip is still busy with a customer, too.

OSCAR—[*Glances through the archway.*] And your husband is just starting to climb the ladder. [*Looks at his watch.*] This is a nice time. [ADELE *takes her hat out of the lowest drawer of the desk.*] What are you doing?

ADELE—Getting my hat.

OSCAR—[*Excitedly.*] But, my dear, where do you expect to talk to him?

ADELE—Now don't get excited. . . . And I told you before you are not to call me dear in the shop.

OSCAR—[*With a glance through the archway.*] He can't hear me. He's up on the ladder. And no matter if he does hear me to-day. You are not going home with him, are you?

ADELE—No; I'm only getting my hat.

OSCAR—You settle everything with him right here . . . in the shop.

ADELE—All right! All right! [*Takes off her hat.*]

OSCAR—[*Excitedly.*] I won't have you go home with him any more.

ADELE—Don't get so excited. I'll talk to him right here. But I have to wait until the customers are gone, haven't I?

OSCAR—Yes, certainly. [*Nervously resumes his task of clearing the counter.*] Forgive me, dear, but I'm awfully nervous. And no wonder.

ADELE—I'm nervous, too. But I control myself.

OSCAR—I'll be right near you, and if you need me I'll come over. The main thing is to keep cool. Now, of all times, you must be cool.

ADELE—Leave everything to me. If I need you I'll call you in.

OSCAR—That's right! That's right! There's only one thing I want to impress upon you. No scandal.

ADELE—He'd never make a scandal.

OSCAR—And you have no business going to his house after this. When you leave here to-day there is only one place for you to go: your mother's house.

ADELE—Now, dear, you're getting excited again.

OSCAR—How can you expect me to be calm? I stand at the turning point of my life. And I'm subject to heart attacks. It runs in our family. I have to be very careful. . . . And yet, my God . . . [*stops his work*] when I think that to-night . . . this ordinary spring night . . . this commonplace Thursday evening . . . you are to be mine . . . definitely and forever . . . mine . . . body and soul. . . . Come here!

ADELE—Be careful.

OSCAR—Come here, come here!

ADELE—[*Goes to him.*] There now, you are getting all excited again.

OSCAR—Only your hand, your hand . . . for a moment.

ADELE—But Oscar!

OSCAR—Your hand! You know I've got heart trouble! [*She gives him her hand. He takes it, looks cautiously through the archway, then speaks, softly but passionately.*] Mine! My own wife!

Before all the world! And together we begin a new and wonderful life. To-night I lead you forth from your prison. . . . Don't take your hand away! I won't have you take your hand away!

ADELE—[*Leaves him; returns to her desk.*] You must behave yourself, Oscar, or you'll make me nervous, too.

OSCAR—Your hand, your hand, your mouth. . . .

ADELE—But, Oscar! . . . You know I need all my wits just now. Clear away that Zephir.

OSCAR—Clear away, clear away! Now, when I want to explode, I must clear a lot of Zephir away! [*Gazes at her adoringly.*] When I think, you sweet, slender, white . . . [*He looks quickly toward the archway, as if he heard something there. His voice changes suddenly.*] Forty Nagykorona Street, apartment two. [*He writes on a tag.*] First floor. Madame Aurel Szelenyi. [PHILIP *and the* YOUNG GENTLEMAN *enter through the archway.*]

PHILIP—This way, Baron. [*Comes in before him.*]

YOUNG GENTLEMAN—Can you still send it to-day?

PHILIP—[*At the cashier's desk.*] If you must have it, sir.

YOUNG GENTLEMAN—[*At the cashier's desk.*] As soon as you can, please.

PHILIP—[*To* ADELE.] Three hundred and eighty-

eight kronen. [*The* YOUNG GENTLEMAN *gives her a banknote.*]

ADELE—[*Rings the cash register, makes change.*] Three hundred and eighty-eight . . . twelve . . . makes four hundred. Thank you, sir.

YOUNG GENTLEMAN—You have the address?

OSCAR—[*In a sing-song tone.*] Thirty-two Museum Street, second floor.

YOUNG GENTLEMAN—[*Staring in surprise at* OSCAR.] That's right. Good day.

OSCAR—[*Hurries to open the door for him.*] Good night, sir.

YOUNG GENTLEMAN—Good night. [*He exits, pauses a moment outside the window, then passes on.*]

PHILIP—Thank you, sir. Good night. [*A brief pause.*]

OSCAR—Now if that pest of a woman would only go. . . . [*To* PHILIP.] Philip, clear those rags away, will you? [*He points to the materials on the counter at right.* PHILIP *obeys.*]

ADELE—Didn't I hear Philip say he had a ticket for Lohengrin to-night?

OSCAR—[*As he goes up toward the archway.*] For what?

ADELE—For the opera.

PHILIP—[*Already working at the counter.*] That makes no difference.

OSCAR—It doesn't begin till seven-thirty. [*He*

exits through the archway. There is a brief pause.]

PHILIP—It begins at seven, but it doesn't matter.

ADELE—Leave that stuff, Philip, and run along to your opera.

PHILIP—Oh, it's all the same to me now. I've been to Lohengrin sixteen times and was late every time. To-night I'll be late for the seventeenth time.

ADELE—Leave that, then, and go, why don't you?

PHILIP—Oh, I might as well be an hour late now. I know all of Lohengrin by heart. The only reason I accept tickets for it any more is because I've never succeeded in seeing the beginning. The part where the swan comes on the stage, pulling Lohengrin in a boat. I'd like to see that just once. But it's too late now. The swan's all through by this time, and has gone home for his supper. [*Continues to fold and put away the materials.*]

ADELE—My husband will clear that away. Don't be so obstinate.

PHILIP—You seem very eager to get rid of me to-night.

ADELE—I don't know what makes you think that.

PHILIP—Just things I've noticed.

ADELE—What have you noticed?

PHILIP—Maybe I had better keep my mouth shut.

ADELE—That's always a good idea. And yet, as long as you mentioned it——

PHILIP—Please, please. . . . I don't want to know. Just leave me out of it.

ADELE—Out of what?

PHILIP—Out of what's going on around here. I'm just a lonesome old man——

ADELE—You are a hateful old man. [*Wrathfully.*] You hate Oscar because he is the heart and soul of the business, because he is young, and clever, and has nice manners, and knows the business better than you do, and because the customers like him better. You are jealous of him.

PHILIP—I consider Mr. Oscar a very ordinary young man.

ADELE—And I admire his type very much!

PHILIP—His kind must live, too, I suppose. [JUHASZ *and the* ARISTOCRATIC LADY *enter through the archway.*]

ARISTOCRATIC LADY—No, your Biarritz won't do. I wonder you keep that grade of material at all.

JUHASZ—Perhaps madame will be good enough to come in again next week. We are expecting an entirely new lot from Vienna. We are certain to find something you like.

ARISTOCRATIC LADY—[*Goes to the cashier's desk.*] Your patience is endless, Mr. Juhasz.

JUHASZ—Patience is a merchant's first duty.

ARISTOCRATIC LADY—You are an angel. A per-

fect angel! [*To* ADELE.] I hope you don't mind my paying your husband compliments.

ADELE—Indeed, no.

ARISTOCRATIC LADY—I daresay you are used to it. Everybody adores Mr. Juhasz.

ADELE—Oh, madame!

ARISTOCRATIC LADY—You are a very fortunate young woman to have such a husband.

JUHASZ—It's I who am fortunate, madame, to have such a devoted little wife. The poor darling sits here every day from early morning till late at night.

ARISTOCRATIC LADY—Has the count been here lately?

ADELE—Our benefactor?

ARISTOCRATIC LADY—The guardian angel of the establishment.

JUHASZ—He was here the day before yesterday.

ARISTOCRATIC LADY—How is he?

ADELE—In love with my husband.

ARISTOCRATIC LADY—You mustn't joke about that, young lady. Everybody loves your husband but his heart is for you alone. Good night, Mr. Angel. . . . I shall look at that Biarritz again in the daylight and that . . . what do you call it . . . too.

PHILIP—[*Angry, but sweetly.*] Agreable.

ARISTOCRATIC LADY—Agreable. Well, good night.

ADELE AND JUHASZ—[*Simultaneously.*] Good night. [*The* ARISTOCRATIC LADY *exits.*]

JUHASZ—[*Closing the door.*] Why didn't you say good night, Philip?

PHILIP—[*Resentfully.*] Good night, madame.

JUHASZ—Well, well. [*To* ADELE.] What a handsome woman she is!

PHILIP—She's been handsome a long time now. And she owes more than she's worth. You are the only merchant in town who gives her credit any more. You just let her haul the stuff out of here as if it didn't cost you anything.

JUHASZ—What can she do, poor woman? She's got to keep up her social position.

PHILIP—But not with your money.

JUHASZ—Aristocratic poverty is the bitterest kind. I haven't the heart to refuse her.

ADELE—Philip is in a temper because he has missed the swan again.

JUHASZ—[*Looks at his watch.*] Did you have a ticket for Lohengrin again?

PHILIP—Yes, and I've still got it.

JUHASZ—Why didn't you tell me? You know I'd have let you off at six-thirty. That really makes me angry. I told you long ago——

PHILIP—Because you're good-hearted there's no need for me to——

JUHASZ—There goes my heart again. You all

talk about my heart as if it were some prima donna. . . . You leave my heart alone.

PHILIP—[*Mocking the* ARISTOCRATIC LADY'S *tone.*] Everybody adores Mr. Juhasz!

JUHASZ—Go on now. What are you waiting for?

PHILIP—Thanks, but I shan't go at all to-night. [*He exits through the archway. There is a pause.*]

JUHASZ—What's wrong with him to-night?

ADELE—I don't know, and I really don't care.

JUHASZ—Why, Adele!

ADELE—[*Comes out from behind the desk.*] Don't be angry, Peter. I am a bit upset to-night. I've come to a very important decision . . . and I feel . . . I must tell you about it to-day.

JHASZ—My dear child . . . I didn't think you had a care in the world.

ADELE—Yes, I have. . . . But you are so good . . . so much better than anyone else. . . . I hardly know how to begin. It's terribly hard to tell you!

JUHASZ—Hard? To tell me? There, put on your things . . . and you can tell me all about it on the way home. Or while we are at supper.

ADELE—No, Peter, I can't tell you on the way home . . . or at supper either. This is something I must tell you here.

JUHASZ—Here and nowhere else?

ADELE—Here . . . and now.

JUHASZ—Urgent as all that! [*Calls through the archway.*] Adolf, we'll close up now.

ADELE—You will understand . . . when I've told you . . . that—— [PAULA *enters through the archway, a sheaf of letters and invoices in her hand.*]

PAULA—May I interrupt a moment, Mrs. Juhasz?

ADELE—Certainly.

PAULA—Semlinger and Weiss have written about those motor robes again . . . the leather-bound ones. They say they are holding two dozen for us.

ADELE—[*Uneasily.*] Let me see. [*She takes the letter.*]

JUHASZ—Didn't you answer them last week?

PAULA—Mrs. Juhasz thought we might wait awhile.

ADELE—How dare you say such a thing?

JUHASZ—But, my dear . . .

PAULA—[*Coldly.*] Mrs. Juhasz instructed me not to answer it.

JUHASZ—If Miss Paula says you . . .

ADELE—I suppose she *can't* be mistaken.

PAULA—I usually am not.

ADELE—What do I care about your old motor robes? [*Throws the letter away.*] I have nothing to do with it. [*Walks away from them.*]

JUHASZ—[*Picks up the letter.*] My wife's a bit nervous to-night. Write Semlinger and Weiss, Miss Paula, that we'll take the whole two dozen. [*Gives*

her the letter; looks at his watch.] But do it in the morning. Go home now. To-morrow is another day.

PAULA—Thanks, Mr. Juhasz, but I don't like to go home while there is work unfinished.

JUHASZ—Miss Paula, I've warned you before . . . you'll ruin your eyes if you are not careful.

PAULA—No fear, Mr. Juhasz. . . . There was something about waterproof coats, too, in their first letter. I must look it up. [*She exits through the archway.*]

JUHASZ—How thorough she is, how orderly!

ADELE—That's what she's paid for. You only see the good side of people.

JUHASZ—I think that must be the only side they show me. [ADOLF *enters through the archway, carrying a long pole with a hook on the end of it.*] Close up, Adolf; close up. It's half past seven. [ADOLF *goes to the door.*] Sit down a moment, Adele. [*To* ADOLF.] Pull it down. We'll go out the back way. [*To* ADELE.] You are a bit agitated. [ADOLF *has gone outside. First he closes the bronze shutter at the window, then he begins to pull down the iron grating at the door. When it is half way down he is interrupted.*]

COUNT—[*Outside.*] Ho, there! Wait a minute! [*He dodges under the half closed grating and enters.*]

JUHASZ—[*Joyfully.*] The count! Good evening, excellency.

COUNT—Good evening! Good evening!

ADELE—[*Bowing low.*] Good evening, your excellency.

[*Simultaneously*]

COUNT—Tell me, do you lock all your customers out like this?

JUHASZ—If we had known, your excellency. [*To* ADOLF.] Raise it up. [ADOLF *raises the grating and exits through the archway.*]

COUNT—I've come to see about those jockey costumes, Juhasz.

JUHASZ—But they were to be sent by post tomorrow.

COUNT—I know, Juhasz, but I'm driving down to the farm to-night . . . and I want to take one costume with me . . . to show to my brother-in-law before the Vienna races.

JUHASZ—The suits are finished, but I'll have to telephone the cap-maker about the caps. Just a moment. [*He hurries off through the archway.*]

ADELE—Won't you sit down, your excellency?

COUNT—Thanks. I'm going in a moment. What's new?

ADELE—Nothing . . . much, your excellency.

COUNT—How's business?

ADELE—Well . . .

COUNT—What? Not good?

ADELE—Not as good as it might be. . . . Your excellency has been so generous to us. . . . I feel I ought to tell you frankly . . . it's quite bad.

COUNT—Why?

ADELE—There is no accounting for it. For two years business was splendid, and now, in the third year, it suddenly stopped. It just won't go.

COUNT—But my whole family deals here . . . and all my friends . . . and all my acquaintances.

ADELE—Oh, yes, your excellency. We have you to thank for everything. Not only for setting us up in business, but for getting us most of our customers.

COUNT—I trust that Juhasz isn't going into debt. [*She nods in the affirmative.*] I daresay he gives his neckties away for nothing. That's why you are losing money.

ADELE—He'd give the whole shop away, if it were left to him.

COUNT—He had the same weakness when he worked for me. Anybody could get anything out of him.

ADELE—It's largely his fault.

COUNT—And what about that young man you praised to me so highly? He was supposed to be a genius. A commercial genius. This . . . what's his name? . . . Oscar . . . wasn't it?

ADELE—Oh, he does all he can, and so do I, but——

COUNT—And that nice Miss Paula . . . she's an industrious girl, what?

ADELE—Your excellency's favorite.

COUNT—I am enchanted with her. [*Paula enters through the archway, with letters in her hand.*]

PAULA—[*With a low bow.*] Good evening, your excellency.

COUNT—Good evening. I was just talking about you.

PAULA—Very good of you. Excuse me. [*To* ADELE.] I was not mistaken, Mrs. Juhasz. Semlinger and Weiss offered us also twenty waterproof coats. We have never given them an answer. [*Proffers the letter.*]

ADELE—[*Impatiently.*] Show it to Mr. Oscar.

PAULA—I did. He referred me to you.

ADELE—[*Crossly.*] We don't want any waterproof coats.

COUNT—Why not? They are very useful things. They keep the rain out.

ADELE—If your excellency would like to order one——

COUNT—Oh, indeed, no! I can't bear waterproof coats. [*Looks at Paula.*] Miss Paula is smiling. . . . Doubtless she's fond of waterproof coats.

PAULA—I beg pardon.

COUNT—Why *did* you smile then? Just making fun of the old man?

PAULA—Old man? . . . Oh!

COUNT—Well, not exactly old.

PAULA—I smiled because your excellency has such an aversion for waterproof coats. But I never thought of you as old.

ADELE—You may go, Miss Paula. [*Paula bows to the count and exits through the archway.*]

COUNT—[*His glance follows her.*] Why are you so severe with that nice young girl?

ADELE—She is a bit forward.

COUNT—Not at all.

ADELE—She is deceitful. I can't bear her. Ordinarily she is very glum and serious, but when your excellency puts your foot in the door she suddenly becomes brisk and cheerful.

COUNT—Really? I am flattered.

JUHASZ—[*Comes through the archway, carrying a jockey suit of brown silk striped in green.*] I can't get the cap-maker on the wire. Oscar is trying again. But here is the jockey suit.

COUNT—[*Adjusts his glass.*] Yes, this will do very well. Will you wrap it up for me, Juhasz? [*Returns the suit to him.*]

OSCAR—[*Rushes in through the archway, speaks rapidly, officiously.*] Your excellency, good evening! We are in luck, your excellency. The caps are fin-

ished; he was going to send them to-morrow, but he can send them at once if your excellency prefers——

COUNT—[*Stares at him in astonishment; turns to* JUHASZ.] What does he say?

JUHASZ—The caps are ready. If your excellency will tell us where to send them——

COUNT—[*Staring at* OSCAR.]—Eh? Yes . . . wait a moment. [PAULA *appears in the archway; he smiles at her.*] Yes.

PAULA—Pardon me for interrupting.

OSCAR—[*Officiously.*] Why don't you come in when his excellency speaks to you?

PAULA—[*Comes nearer.*] I only wanted to say the cap-maker telephoned again. I told him to send the caps. His man will be here with them in ten minutes.

COUNT—That was clever of you. Thanks very much.

PAULA—Not at all, your excellency. [*She exits through the archway.*]

COUNT—[*His glance has followed her until she vanished.*] Well, then . . . there was something I wanted to say.

JUHASZ—Where you want the cap sent.

COUNT—Yes. Hm! Nowhere. I'm going to the casino . . . my motor will pick me up there. . . . You keep the cap for me here. I'll stop for it later.

OSCAR—[*Briskly.*] Just as you say, sir. I'll have

it packed up for you at once. Excuse me, excellency. [*Hurries off through the archway.*]

COUNT—[*Stares after him in amazement; does not speak until he is gone.*] What an extraordinary fellow!

JUHASZ—[*With an apologetic smile.*] He is always in a hurry.

COUNT—[*Comes affectionately close to* JUHASZ.] Business bad, eh? [JUHASZ *looks quickly at* ADELE.] Yes, she told me.

ADELE—I didn't think we had any secrets from his——

JUHASZ—From his excellency? No. But I don't like to have you complain——

COUNT—She didn't complain. She only answered my questions.

JUHASZ—Well, there are a few difficulties, but . . . we'll overcome them somehow. We shan't go into bankruptcy.

COUNT—I should hope not.

JUHASZ—We've worked faithfully . . . but one can't expect the sun to shine all the time. There must be cloudy days, too. But they pass.

COUNT—[*Affectionately.*] I should be offended if my friend Juhasz were in trouble and didn't tell me. Well? You must tell me.

JUHASZ—No real trouble, your excellency. I have

my health and a good little wife [*takes her hand*] who loves me.

COUNT—[*To* ADELE, *approvingly.*] That's right. Bravo!

JUHASZ—And friends . . . my smart and loyal Oscar. He is the heart and soul of the business.

COUNT—He seems a bit . . . sudden.

JUHASZ—And then there is Paula. She is the policeman of the business. Now, how can I possibly go wrong?

COUNT—Well, my dear Juhasz, I must be off. [*As he shakes hands.*] I can only tell you again what I told you once before, when you were in difficulties. . . . For fifteen years you sat at a desk in my castle at Gerelypuszta. I never had as good a man in my service before or since. It is true you wasted a lot of your time cultivating flowers, and at best you were never very energetic. . . .

JUHASZ—That is something one learns.

COUNT—Never, but that doesn't matter. It is character that counts with me. That desk has been vacant three years now. I want you to know that, whatever happens, that place is open to you as long as Gerelypuszta belongs to me or my family.

JUHASZ—Oh, your excellency!

COUNT—If I only had someone half as honest as you right now! We are beginning to export cheese on a large scale. Mostly to England.

JUHASZ—Puszta cheese?

COUNT—Yes . . . it has been a great success. London is mad about that cheese. And so am I. I took first prize with it in London and in Edinburgh, too. You have no idea how proud that made me.

JUHASZ—I remember your first experiment with that cheese.

COUNT—But you'd never know it now. [*With enthusiasm.*] I succeeded in crossing two breeds: Camembert, that over-ripe beauty, with Roquefort, that sharp, sardonic old gentleman. And the child of that marriage I nurtured and reared with my own hands. So naturally I am proud of the career it is making for itself. . . . Well, I must be going. Remember, let nothing worry you. If everything else fails you: Gerelypuszta, Desk, Cheese! Good night!

ADELE—Good night, your excellency.

JUHASZ—[*Opens the door.*] See you later, excellency. [*The* COUNT *exits. He closes the door.*] You shouldn't have complained to him, dear.

ADELE—I didn't. He asked me.

JUHASZ—I don't want to be put in a false position. He has done more for me already than my own father could have done.

ADELE—[*Hesitantly.*] Well, now, Peter . . . if you have a moment. . . .

JUHASZ—Certainly, my angel. I'm really curious to know what it is that's agitating this [*takes her*

head in his hands] precious little head. [*Looks into her eyes.*] See here! There are tears in your eyes! It isn't anything serious?

ADELE—Yes, Peter, it is serious . . . very serious.

JUHASZ—Well?

ADELE—[*Pulls a stool over for him.*] Sit down here, Peter.

JUHASZ—Serious as that? [*He sits.*]

ADELE—There are two separate things I must talk to you about. And one is harder than the other.

JUHASZ—Let us have the hardest first.

ADELE—If you weren't such a good man, it wouldn't be half as difficult to tell you—— [*She dries her eyes.*]

JUHASZ—There, there, my dear! I am sure you have done nothing you need to cry about.

ADELE—It's on your account I'm crying.

JUHASZ—On my account?

ADELE—Peter . . . [*Dries her eyes; collects herself.*] Those different sums of money . . . you gave me . . . I made you give me . . . these past three years . . . because you are so foolish about money . . . and can't refuse anyone who asks you. . . . I told you I was putting the money in a savings bank. . . . Well, so I did. . . . You know it amounts to fifty-one thousand kronen.

JUHASZ—I know.

ADELE—I just found out from Oscar that there

had been a meeting of your creditors, and that the lawyer came to see you. . . . You didn't tell me.

JUHASZ—No, dear.

ADELE—You didn't tell me because you were afraid I'd be worried. I know. . . . You offered the creditors this fifty-one thousand kronen on account of their claims if they would refrain from forcing you into bankruptcy . . . and they accepted because they like you and trust you [*bursts into tears*] and know you are the best and most honest man in the world.

JUHASZ—I asked Oscar not to say anything to you about it.

ADELE—He was right to tell me. And now, Peter, it is terrible to have to say it straight to your face . . .

JUHASZ—You spent some of the money. No matter, my child. Don't let it worry you.

ADELE—Oh, my God . . . my God. . . .

JUHASZ—All the money isn't worth this agitation. Tell me how much is gone. I'll raise it somehow.

ADELE—A great deal is gone.

JUHASZ—How much? Whatever you spent, I'm sure you did it for the best.

ADELE—Peter . . . forgive me . . . it is all gone.

JUHASZ—All?

ADELE—All. There isn't a heller left. . . . Peter

. . . [*Weeping.*] Kill me. I have ruined you. [*A brief pause.*]

JUHASZ—My dear . . . really . . . it doesn't matter. . . . I thought God knows what had happened . . . but if that's all . . .

ADELE—Don't try to make light of it, Peter. I know perfectly well that what the lawyer told you was the creditors' very last offer. But when I found that out, it was too late. The money was gone.

JUHASZ—Now you mustn't cry. It's childish to take the thing so much to heart. Everything will be all right. The lawyer's heart isn't made of stone.

ADELE—[*Weeping.*] All lawyers' hearts are made of stone.

JUHASZ—We'll have a nice little talk with him. My money is your money, isn't it? It's all my fault, anyway. Why didn't I save the money myself? . . . You had a perfect right to spend it. Kiss me, and tell what else is troubling you.

ADELE—[*Kisses him.*] You are so good!

JUHASZ—Well now, out with the other calamity.

ADELE—That is much harder.

JUHASZ—No matter, my dear. It won't be as bad as you suppose.

ADELE—You know that I have always been a faithful wife to you. . . . We have no children . . . and ours wasn't exactly a love marriage . . . but all my affections were yours. [JUHASZ *takes her hand.*]

In the whole three years I never looked at or thought of another man . . . and that is precisely why it's so hard for me now. . . . If I weren't a respectable woman, it would be easy . . . but I simply can't deceive a man like you . . . I can't. . . . [*A brief pause.*]

JUHASZ—You love . . . someone else. [*She only nods. He utters the word for her softly, thoughtfully.*] Yes. [*There is a pause.*]

ADELE—I respect you too much to let you go on believing for a single moment . . . [*Another pause.*]

JUHASZ—You don't love me any more.

ADELE—I do care for you, but . . .

JUHASZ—But you love someone else.

ADELE—I love *you* like a brother . . . you know yourself I never loved your body . . . only your soul. . . . It was always a struggle for me . . . but now that I love another . . . I must tell you.

JUHASZ—This comes . . . so suddenly. . . . I—I—— [ADELE *sobs.*] You poor, dear child . . . It's only a sort of illness. . . . It will pass. . . . Every wife goes through such a crisis . . . some time or another. . . . And I'll help you through it. . . . I'll be as gentle and tactful as I can. . . . And before you know it, you'll have forgotten all about it . . . and come to your senses . . . and be the same happy, contented Adele you used to be. . . . My good, loyal Adele, I don't know how another man

would act in my place . . . but this is how I feel. . . . But there! Are you crying again?

ADELE—It's unbearable how good you are!

JUHASZ—Shouldn't I have said that?

ADELE—Peter . . . this isn't just a passing fancy, as you suppose. I not only love this man . . .

JUHASZ—What else?

ADELE—I want to belong to him. [*A pause.*]

JUHASZ—That is . . . more serious. [*Takes an aimless pace or two, sits down, puts his head in his hands.*] When you said that . . . I felt so . . . lonely . . . all of a sudden.

[*A delivery boy enters at the door. He carries three big packages and a rocking-horse.*]

DELIVERY BOY—Mr. Peter Juhasz?

JUHASZ—[*Goes to him.*] Yes, yes. From the toy store? . . . All right, my son, just put them down. [*Gives the boy a tip; calls.*] Adolf!

DELIVERY BOY—Thank you, sir. Good night. [*The boy exits at the door.* ADOLF *enters through the archway.*]

JUHASZ—For your little boy's birthday to-morrow. A horse, a steamship and an automobile. And this is for your little girl, so that she won't feel slighted.

ADOLF—[*Tries to kiss his hand.*] Oh, thank you . . . thank you, sir!

JUHASZ—Yes, yes. Take them away. . . . Or,

wait! Leave the steamship here a moment. I'll have to show you how it works. . . . The automobile is quite simple, but the ship has a rather complicated mechanism. . . . I'll explain it to you before I go home. [ADOLF *puts the steamship under the downstage end of the counter at right, then exits through the archway with the remaining packages.* JUHASZ *turns to* ADELE.] Forgive me. . . . My god-son, you know.

ADELE—[*Who has been weeping silently.*] Peter, if you only knew how sorry I am.

JUHASZ—I'm afraid I made it harder for you . . . but I have a headache . . . and everything came at once. . . . I'm sorry . . . but you *were* a bit cruel.

ADELE—Kill me, Peter.

JUHASZ—But you were honest with me . . . you couldn't be anything else. And yet I think it would have been less painful to me . . . if you had simply betrayed me.

ADELE—I can't betray you, Peter. I respect you too much. [*Weeping.*] Don't ask me to do that.

JUHASZ—You want to become another man's wife. How can I prevent you? Go, if you must. He is surely a better man than——

ADELE—No, no!

JUHASZ—But you are leaving me for him.

ADELE—You are a much better man . . . and yet . . . I can't explain——

JUHASZ—Younger, better looking . . .

ADELE—Do you know who it is?

JUHASZ—I don't want to know.

ADELE—I don't want to hurt you again . . . but you must soon find out.

JUHASZ—Soon find out? [*A brief pause.*]

ADELE—Oscar.

JUHASZ—Oscar . . . our Oscar?

ADELE—Yes. [*A pause.*]

JUHASZ—So that . . . so that . . .

ADELE—[*Ardently.*] I love him, Peter, and he adores me. And we are leaving the city. . . . You will never hear of us again.

JUHASZ—Oscar. . . .

ADELE—All the time we've been here together, like one big family, we could have done things behind your back. But a man like you . . . We couldn't bring ourselves to deceive you. Oscar couldn't either. He loves you like a brother.

JUHASZ—I know . . . you are both devoted to me.

ADELE—We are going to Berlin. There a new life awaits us . . . but that's something you can't understand, because there is no spirit of adventure in you. . . . To escape from this cage . . . out into the wide world . . . to try our luck . . . and find wealth, perhaps . . . and power. . . . Let me call him in!

JUHASZ—If you like.

ADELE—He is so fond of you. [*Runs to the archway.*] Oscar! [*Comes down stage again.*] It grieves him so. . . . [OSCAR *enters through the archway, slowly, sadly. Up stage, between the two counters, he pauses.*]

OSCAR—Does he know everything?

ADELE—Yes.

OSCAR—Peter, this moment had to come.

JUHASZ—Never mind that, my son.

OSCAR—[*Begins rhetorically.*] From first to last our conduct has been irreproachable——

JUHASZ—It's my own conduct I'm thinking about, not yours.

OSCAR—I see you intend to act nobly.

JUHASZ—Nobly?

OSCAR—Or else you would kill both of us.

JUHASZ—Please! I don't want to stand in your way. I don't know how another man would act in my place, but——

OSCAR *and* ADELE—[*Simultaneously.*] The same! Just the same!

JUHASZ—But it's the way I feel.

OSCAR—You are the best . . . the best . . . the best . . . [*Suddenly kisses his hand.*]

JUHASZ—Have you gone mad?

OSCAR—Pardon me. Before we part forever there is one promise I want to make you on my sacred

word of honor. I'll send you back that money the very first day I get it. Not a day later.

ADELE—[*Quickly; embarrassed.*] I couldn't tell you before. . . . I had hoped you'd understand. I didn't spend the fifty-one thousand kronen myself. . . . I gave them to Oscar.

OSCAR—[*Quickly.*] That is, not for me, but for a little enterprise in Berlin in which I have bought an interest. A little shop of which I—that is, we—are to be one-fourth owners. Steger and Company! Steger—that's Steger. And the Company—that's me. . . . At first I thought of putting up my own name instead of Company, but as long as Adele got the money I decided it would be only fair to say Company, and that includes her too. . . .

JUHASZ—She gave the money to you?

OSCAR—I didn't want it for myself. My God, I can live on bread and water. But I couldn't ask Adele to share the uncertain existence of a shop clerk. . . . That would have been, if I may say so, unscrupulous of me. I had to provide for her future.

JUHASZ—If she gave you the money, it's yours.

OSCAR—I considered that I owed it to *you* to provide for her future decently. You would have every right to despise me if I hadn't.

JUHASZ—I must admit . . . you managed things cleverly.

OSCAR—[*In an injured tone.*] What do you mean

by that? I did everything honestly and above board. [*Takes* ADELE's *hand.*] Our relations couldn't have been purer if we were two children.

JUHASZ—[*A bit sharply.*] Please! I forbid you to discuss that. She is still my wife. There is no question about her purity here.

OSCAR—[*Aggressively.*] I might have known you would take that tone. [PHILIP *appears in the archway.*]

PHILIP—You are wanted on the telephone, Mr. Juhasz.

JUHASZ—Coming. [*He exits through the archway;* PHILIP *lets him pass, looks frigidly at* ADELE *and* OSCAR, *then exits too.*]

ADELE—[*Suddenly.*] What did you shout at him for?

OSCAR—I know what I'm doing. Just you cry . . . and let me shout. Now hurry and get ready. He's taken it much too hard to suit me. Where's your hat?

ADELE—But I've got to say good-bye to——

OSCAR—Get your hat when I tell you to! I know what I'm talking about. Have some consideration for my weak heart, and don't get me excited. [JUHASZ *re-enters.*]

JUHASZ—[*Sees the hat in* ADELE's *hand.*] It was your sister. She wanted to know whether we could

come to supper to-night. I told her . . . that . . . I didn't know.

OSCAR—Adele is going to her mother's.

JUHASZ—Right now?

OSCAR—Right now. [*There is a pause.*]

JUHASZ—Then . . . it's to-night . . . you're leaving?

OSCAR—We have decided . . . as long as everything is settled . . . that Adele hadn't better go to your house any more. That would only make it harder for you . . . and we would like to . . . spare you . . . all we can.

ADELE—It's your feelings we are considering. . . .

JUHASZ—You are right. That would be best.

ADELE—I'm going to mother's, and Oscar goes to Berlin to-morrow. And we shan't see each other again until after the divorce is granted.

OSCAR—We mean to do what's correct . . . everything correct. We owe that much to you. And, on my word of honor, you'll get your money back as soon as I have it. I shan't wait for profits. No; I'll send it to you out of the first money we take in. Without a moment's delay. Here's my hand on it.

JUHASZ—[*Waving away the proffered hand.*] That's all right. I don't think you'd lie to me now.

OSCAR—You know me better than that.

JUHASZ—[*To* ADELE, *who has put on her things.*]

Then . . . we shan't see each other . . . for a long . . . for a long time. . . . Perhaps never.

OSCAR—[*Uneasily.*] Don't say that. It's not fair to say that. If ever you are in Berlin, consider our home your own.

JUHASZ—Thank you.

OSCAR—And let's not prolong our leavetakings. I've got to consider my weak heart. Excitement is bad for me.

ADELE—Good-bye, Peter. Will you kiss me?

OSCAR—Kiss her. She's worthy of it. [*Turns away and dries his eyes.*]

JUHASZ—[*Kisses her.*] Don't cry, Adele. . . . I suppose it had to be . . . but not one woman in a thousand would have acted as you have acted. . . . There! Lift up your head and smile at me. . . . You were a good wife to me . . . and now you are my very good friend. [ADELE *nods.*] Shall I see you as far as your mother's house?

ADELE—No. . . . I'll take a cab. Good-bye, Peter. [*She nods silently to* OSCAR *and passes swiftly through the door. There is a brief pause.*]

OSCAR—Only one word more, Peter, about a matter of business, and then we can shake hands and part. I had a talk with the lawyer to-day——

JUHASZ—But, please——

OSCAR—I couldn't go away and let them throw you into bankruptcy. [*Hands him a document.*]

Here is the agreement. Read it over when you get home. It stipulates that, in consideration of your unquestionable integrity, your creditors agree not to file a petition in bankruptcy against you, but to wait six months longer . . . for the fifty-one thousand kronen you lent me.

JUHASZ—Lent you? Yes, that's right.

OSCAR—And which I will return to you . . . my word of honor . . . maybe in two weeks, maybe not for three months, but certainly within six months. My word of honor!

JUHASZ—[*Turning the document over helplessly.*] Yes.

OSCAR—But your creditors make one stipulation. Until the fifty-one thousand is paid to them, they want a receiver to run the business instead of you.

JUHASZ—Receiver?

OSCAR—It's wrong, I know . . . but in some ways the creditors are right. . . . You are too easy with people who owe you money . . . and with the people who work for you. . . . You are not businesslike. . . . What this place needs is a strong hand. . . . They tried to get me to take charge, but I . . . Of course they didn't know anything about . . . I only said I was leaving the country. . . . Well, the main thing is that on the day you pay the fifty-one thousand kronen the business is yours again.

JUHASZ—And this . . . receiver? . . . When does he take charge?

OSCAR—On the day I leave.

JUHASZ—You said you were leaving to-morrow.

OSCAR—Yes.

JUHASZ—Well, then——

OSCAR—To-morrow morning at eight the receiver will be here.

JUHASZ—Then the shop doesn't belong to me any more . . . and I may as well stay home to-morrow morning.

OSCAR—What's the use of exaggerating like that? Certainly you can come to-morrow.

JUHASZ—As a clerk in my own shop?

OSCAR—Can I help it? Didn't I do everything I could? Didn't I run around seeing people and making arrangements? [*More and more resentfully.*] I didn't expect any thanks for it, but you needn't look at me that way. As for the money, my word of honor——

JUHASZ—I know.

OSCAR—[*Takes his hand.*] Good luck! [*Points to the archway.*] I'm going that way. I shan't even walk the same street as Adele until the divorce is granted. [*In the archway.*] Don't look at me like that! [*Emotionally.*] I had to provide for her future, hadn't I? [*He exits.* JUHASZ *is left alone. He looks at the document, crumples it into his*

pocket, glances around the shop, then sits down near the counter, at right, staring vacantly. PAULA *enters through the archway, a letter in her hand.*]

JUHASZ—You still here, Paula?

PAULA—About those waterproof coats, Mr. Juhasz. Mr. Oscar referred me to your wife [*notices that* ADELE *is not there; pauses*]—and she said we didn't want any waterproof coats, but I think we really should order a few. [*Waits for his answer.*]

JUHASZ—[*Lost in thought, still staring absently.*] Yes. [*A pause.*]

PAULA—Shall I order some, Mr. Juhasz?

JUHASZ—[*Looks up at her.*] What? Oh, yes.

PAULA—About a dozen? [*A pause.*]

JUHASZ—Paula—— [*He rises.*] The fact is that from to-morrow on the shop doesn't belong to me.

PAULA—Doesn't belong to you?

JUHASZ—In a word, Paula, my wife has left me and is going to Berlin with Oscar . . . and I have failed. . . . To-morrow morning a receiver, appointed by my creditors, takes charge . . . and he'll be the boss here. . . . So why should I worry my head about waterproof coats? [*A pause.*]

PAULA—I—I don't know what to say, Mr. Juhasz.

JUHASZ—Don't say anything, Paula. I didn't say

anything myself. No. And let those letters go for to-night. I can't have you ruining your eyes.

PAULA—As if you hadn't troubles enough of your own without worrying about my eyes.

JUHASZ—Troubles? . . . Well . . .

PAULA—I can imagine how you must feel.

JUHASZ—Yes, here I stand like a tree in the park that is only good for lovers to meet under . . .

PAULA—And then go away.

JUHASZ—But first they cut their names in it with a sharp knife. [ADOLF, *carrying his long pole, comes through the archway.*] What's the matter?

ADOLF—It's eight o'clock, Mr. Juhasz.

JUHASZ—[*Still a bit absently.*] Yes, you can really close up now, Adolf. [ADOLF *goes out, pulls the grating half way down.*]

COUNT—[*His voice is heard from the street.*] Here, here, here! Are you trying to lock me out again? [*He dodges under the grating and enters. He is wearing a motor coat and cap.* ADOLF, *pole in hand, follows him in, grinning.*] Tell me, my friend, do you do that on purpose? [ADOLF *only grins.*] Whenever I try to get in you come along with that big stick and pull the grating down. You don't like me, what? [ADOLF's *grin is broader.*] Here! [*Gives him money.*] Here is something for you. Try to like me better. [*Adolf tries to kiss his hand. The* COUNT *waves him off.*] Never mind

that. [*The* COUNT *comes down right.* ADOLF *exits through the archway.*] He is always trying to close the door in my face. [*Looks at them wonderingly.*] What's the matter? You look so cheerful, Juhasz.

JUHASZ—Excellency . . . I don't know how to tell you. [PAULA *is about to go.*] Don't go, Miss Paula.

PAULA—I only wanted to see whether the cap has arrived for his excellency.

COUNT—Thank you, Paula.

PAULA—Not at all, your excellency. [*She exits through the archway.*]

COUNT—Well, what is it? Things going wrong after all?

JUHASZ—Not exactly wrong, excellency. I suppose everything that happens is for the best. But just a while ago your excellency was kind enough to repeat what you had often said before. . . . [*Pushes a stool toward him.*] Please sit down.

COUNT—[*Sits.*] Well?

JUHASZ—That desk at Gerelypuszta . . . which . . . was always open to me.

COUNT—Yes, yes. What of it?

JUHASZ—Well, I'd like to go back to that desk.

COUNT—How's that? In the last ten minutes you've . . .

JUHASZ—In the last ten minutes.

COUNT—That is very interesting. [*Looks around.*] Where is your wife?

JUHASZ—That's just it, your excellency.

COUNT—I don't understand.

JUHASZ—My wife is going to divorce me and marry Oscar. The business is to be taken over by a receiver to-morrow morning. And here I stand, all alone in the world and free as a bird.

COUNT—[*Jovially.*] My dear Juhasz, you are not a bird, you are now general manager . . . or no . . . general director of the Gerelypuszta Cheese Exporting Company.

JUHASZ—Your excellency's generosity is boundless.

COUNT—The excellence of Gerelypuszta cheese is boundless, and my luck is boundless to get you back again. Juhasz, I wouldn't trust my own brother with that cheese . . . but I'll trust you with it.

JUHASZ—I shall be very happy if . . .

COUNT—I shall be happy. When can you come? Drive down with me to-night.

JUHASZ—Excellency, my things, my house . . .

COUNT—How soon *can* you come?

JUHASZ—Well . . . perhaps the end of this week . . . or the beginning of next.

COUNT—The sooner the better. You can't come soon enough to suit me. [*Rises.*] I congratulate myself. [PAULA *enters through the archway.*]

Now we will organize things on a big scale, Juhasz. We shall become an international enterprise. Gerelypuszta Cheeses, Ltd.! . . . And as to my neighbor and competitor, Baron Goldberger, we'll settle him! . . . But, my dear friend, how selfish of me! I forgot all about your troubles.

JUHASZ—And I forgot all about your caps, excellency. [*Starts to go.*] Excuse me a moment.

PAULA—The caps just came. Philip is wrapping them up.

JUHASZ—One is to go in with that jockey suit. [*He exits through the archway. There is a pause.*]

COUNT—Well, Miss Paula, what do you think of it?

PAULA—It's a gorgeous red, your excellency.

COUNT—What is?

PAULA—The cap.

COUNT—You little rogue! You know very well I mean this . . . er . . . domestic tragedy.

PAULA—What *can* I think of it, your excellency? [*Comes nearer to him.*] I know what it means to *me.* I've lost my job.

COUNT—How's that? Can't you stay on with the new boss?

PAULA—I suppose I could, but mother wouldn't dream of letting me. . . . She only let me work for Mr. Juhasz because he has been a sort of second father to me. But I know she won't let me stay

under any other boss. . . . And I haven't the heart to oppose mother's wishes. The poor dear is so ill, and she has trouble enough with my wild brother.

COUNT—[*Who has been studying her appraisingly.*] Too bad! I shall be sorry not to see you any more.

PAULA—Oh, your excellency!

COUNT—But even if you were staying on, I shouldn't come here any more. . . . I only came on Juhasz's account.

PAULA—We all know that, your excellency.

COUNT—Yes. And yet I am really sorry I shan't be seeing you any more.

PAULA—Oh, your excellency!

COUNT—It was always a great pleasure to see you . . . when I happened to come in.

PAULA—Your excellency embarrasses me.

COUNT—May I make a parting confession? Often I came only for the privilege of seeing you and exchanging a few casual words with you. To-day, for instance. Though you did make fun of me.

PAULA—I didn't, your excellency.

COUNT—Because I am an old boy . . . But all is not old that glitters. Why, my heart feels seventeen when I see you.

PAULA—But, your excellency!

COUNT—Oh, let's drop that "excellency"!

[PHILIP *enters through the archway, drying his hands.*]

PAULA—[*Unaware of* PHILIP's *presence.*] You mustn't think I consider you old.

COUNT—Now . . . don't pretend!

PAULA—Your white hair . . . is one of your most attractive features. . . . If you only knew . . . how odious young men are . . . compared with an aristocratic, middle-aged gentleman like . . . Oh, your excellency, I beg pardon. . . . I'll go and get your package. [*Makes a movement toward the archway.*]

COUNT—Wait! Juhasz will bring it. Don't rob me of this last minute with you.

PAULA—[*With fine coquetry.*] Last?

COUNT—You are going home to your mother, and I am going back to Gerelypuszta . . . You are a very clever girl . . . and I am not exactly stupid myself. . . . It would not be impossible, I daresay, to find you somewhere in the city. . . . But an old man must be as cautious and circumspect . . . as a young girl . . . and I try to be a very sensible old man. . . . I shall teach myself to do without you . . . slowly, painlessly. [PHILIP *goes up behind the counter at back.*] Poor Juhasz went into bankruptcy just in time for me, just in time.

[JUHASZ, *carrying the package, enters through the archway.*]

JUHASZ—All packed and ready, your excellency. [*Goes to the door.*] I'll give it to your chauffeur. [*He exits.*]

COUNT—What is that?

PHILIP—One jockey suit and a cap, your excellency.

COUNT—[*Turns in surprise.*] Oh, you are here too?

PHILIP—I am here, excellency.

COUNT—[*Turns to Paula.*] Well, then . . . good-bye, Miss Paula.

PAULA—[*With a bow.*] Your excellency!

COUNT—You don't even offer to shake hands?

PAULA—Oh! . . . [*They shake hands.*]

COUNT—[*To* PHILIP, *going.*] Good night.

PHILIP—Good night, your excellency.

COUNT—[*In the doorway.*] Tell that man with the long stick that he can pull this grating down now. [*Dodges under the grating and exits.*]

JUHASZ—[*His voice is heard from the street.*] Good-bye, your excellency. [*The noise of a motor starting is heard. It dwindles and dies out in the distance.*] [JUHASZ *re-enters.*] Well, children. Let's get finished. It is high time we were out of here. [*He takes out a drawer of the cash-register and exits with it through the archway.*]

PAULA—I want to bid you good-bye, Philip. I suppose you will be staying on here.

PHILIP—Yes. You are a very sly young lady, Paula.

PAULA—Am I? Why?

PHILIP—I heard you.

PAULA—Did you hear anything . . . wrong?

PHILIP—Wrong? . . . No. . . . Just clever.

PAULA—What do you mean?

PHILIP—You know what you're doing, my girl. Only you started a bit late. Mr. Juhasz is going, and the shop is gone, and the Count isn't coming back, and you won't be able to flirt with him any more. Too late!

PAULA—Do you think so?

PHILIP—Yes, I do. The Count told you as much to your face.

PAULA—I wouldn't be so sure of that, Mr. Philip.

PHILIP—Of what?

PAULA—That I shan't see the Count again.

PHILIP—Now you're losing your temper.

PAULA—[*With growing passion.*] A great deal has gone on in this shop that you didn't know about.

PHILIP—Oh, I think not.

PAULA—You've worked alongside of me for the past three years and don't know me yet.

PHILIP—I think I do.

PAULA—Then you won't be surprised to hear that I'm going to Gerelypuszta too.

PHILIP—What? What for?

PAULA—To be near the Count.

PHILIP—In Heaven's name! [*Clasps his hands in horror.*] When did you decide that?

PAULA—Just now . . . This very minute. [*She is greatly excited.*] Are you surprised? . . . For a whole year that Mrs. Juhasz has plagued me. . . . You saw her. . . . She treated me like a dog. . . . Tried her best to drive me away. And why do you suppose I was so patient? Why did I never answer back?

PHILIP—Miss Paula!

PAULA—[*Still more vehementiy.*] What did I endure it for? [*Points to the door.*] For my future, Mr. Philip, for my future . . . who just passed through that door . . . and rode off in his motor car. But I mean to follow him, Mr. Philip. Make no mistake about that. That old man has been staring at me for a year . . . ogling me . . . and I have been . . . slowly and carefully . . . playing my game. . . . You needn't look so horrified, Mr. Philip . . . a filthy little intrigue isn't what I was after . . . no . . . here I have sat . . . sighing away my youth . . . among a lot of motor coats bound for Paris and Ostend . . . pretty travelling veils soon to be worn in London . . . and Monte Carlo . . . out in the great, glittering world. . . . I want to live, too, Mr. Philip, to live, to live. . . . And now shall I give up all hope simply

because this little shop has gone under? No, my dear Philip, I shan't let his excellency get away from me that easily.

PHILIP—You won't let him——

PAULA—I'm going to follow him to Gerelypuszta. The rest will be easy.

PHILIP—And what will you tell your mother?

PAULA—That Mr. Juhasz is taking me. She'll let me go with him.

PHILIP—And what will you tell Mr. Juhasz?

PAULA—That I can't leave him alone in all this trouble . . . that I can't part from him.

PHILIP—Deceive him? You too? You'd take advantage of him too?

PAULA—Yes.

PHILIP—You'd use *him* for a purpose like that?

PAULA—I'm sick of poverty, Mr. Philip. . . . If you knew how sick I am of being poor!

PHILIP—It's monstrous!

PAULA—Can I help it? . . . I tell you I won't grow old over a typewriting machine. I won't let myself decay in this dingy office.

PHILIP—But Mr. Juhasz——

PAULA—I'm not considering anyone except myself. I need Mr. Juhasz now, and, no matter what you say, I mean to use him.

PHILIP—[*Scrutinizing her narrowly.*] This isn't wickedness. It's only childish egotism.

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PAULA—I mean to do just what I said.

PHILIP—And suppose I prevent you?

PAULA—How?

PHILIP—Suppose I tell Mr. Juhasz exactly what you said.

PAULA—First you worm everything out of me . . . and then . . . But he wouldn't believe you . . . Besides . . . you won't tell . . . you are too fond of him yourself.

PHILIP—That's exactly why. He is bound to find out sooner or later.

PAULA—No. A man like him never sees such things. [*Confidently.*] You won't tell. You won't open your mouth. [JUHASZ *enters through the archway, carrying his hat and cane.*]

JUHASZ—And now, dear Miss Paula, there is one painful duty left for me to do. I promised your mother that I would look after you as a father . . . and now . . . I must send you back to your mother. . . . I . . . forgive me for the ceremony . . . I discharge you, Miss Paula. . . . But to-morrow I will use what influence I may have with the new boss——

PAULA—[*Firmly.*] That won't be necessary, Mr. Juhasz.

JUHASZ—Don't you want to keep your job?

PAULA—No.

JUHASZ—Why not?

PAULA—Because I . . . am going with you, Mr. Juhasz.

JUHASZ—With me?

PAULA—With you . . . wherever you may go.

JUHASZ—[*Amazed.*] Miss Paula!

PAULA—There is no use discussing it. You know I always do what I say.

JUHASZ—[*Puts down his hat and stick.*] With me, Miss Paula?

PAULA—With you.

JUHASZ—But the place I am going to . . . is a tiny village . . . deep in the country . . . at the end of the world.

PAULA—I'm going too. If there's work for you, there will be work for me too.

JUHASZ—But you are young, Miss Paula. . . . Why should you leave Budapest . . . now . . . when so many new enterprises are being founded? . . . Why, with your talent and industry——

PAULA—Let us not discuss it, please, Mr. Juhasz. I am going with you.

JUHASZ—Do you hear that, Philip?

PHILIP—[*Morosely.*] I hear.

PAULA—Promise that you'll take me with you . . . and look upon me . . . as you always have . . . as your child . . . as your friend.

JUHASZ—[*Deeply moved.*] I am compensated

. . . Paula . . . for all . . . all that I suffered today. . . . God is good to me, after all.

PAULA—[*Low, ashamed.*] I am devoted to you, Mr. Juhasz. You know that. . . . Will you excuse me now? I must go, or mother will be worried about me. [*Starts to go.*] Besides, I think Mr. Philip has something to tell you. [*She exits through the archway.*]

JUHASZ—[*Deeply touched.*] What a heart she has! . . . That is the stuff that saints and martyrs are made of. . . . And to think that here [*with an emotional break in his voice*]—here in this dim little shop . . . such loyalty . . . such devotion should have blossomed . . . unknown . . . [*Dries his eyes.*] It's good to know there are such people in the world! [PHILIP, *in surly silence, picks up his hat and stick, pulls on his gloves.*] Is there something you wanted to say to me, Philip?

PHILIP—Hm. . . . Do you know that . . . [*Stops.*]

JUHASZ—Well?

PHILIP—Well, you know . . . er . . .

JUHASZ—Don't play the cynic with me, you old hypocrite . . . you . . . I know what you are hiding under those gruff, silent ways of yours.

PHILIP—No . . . that's not it.

JUHASZ—Now don't pretend to me. . . . I know

your faithful heart, Philip . . . you needn't be ashamed because you are touched.

PHILIP—[*Lowers his eyes.*] You are right.

JUHASZ—I knew it.

PHILIP—[*Softly.*] I am touched.

JUHASZ—What were you going to say to me?

PHILIP—I wasn't going to say anything. [*There is a pause.*]

JUHASZ—[*Picks up his hat and stick.*] I'm a lucky man, after all. . . . My wife and Oscar . . . You must admit they were honest about it. . . . And how eager he was to get me back the shop. . . . And the Count . . . see how generous he was to me. . . . And then . . . to crown it all . . . that good, loyal girl. . . . Really, Philip, love and trust are always repaid in kind in this world. . . . I've found that out. . . . But you needn't look so morose about it. . . .

PHILIP—God bless you, Mr. Juhasz!

JUHASZ—Look after things until I come back. . . . They are sure to send the money by autumn.

PHILIP—Are they?

JUHASZ—Oscar? He'll send it . . . if he has to starve for it. [PAULA *enters, dressed for the street. Behind her comes* ADOLF *with his pole.*]

PHILIP—Good night.

JUHASZ—Are you going to the opera?

PHILIP—No. I gave my ticket to the cap-maker's apprentice.

JUHASZ—Then you'll see Paula home as usual?

PHILIP—Sorry. I'm going the other way to-night. Good night!

JUHASZ *and* PAULA—Good night. [PHILIP *exits through the door. A brief pause.*]

JUHASZ—What's the matter with Philip to-night?

PAULA—He's upset, of course. He loves you too. . . . [*A brief pause.*]

ADOLF—Can I close up now?

JUHASZ—Certainly. [ADOLF *exits. A brief pause.*] What are you waiting for? Why don't you pull it down?

ADOLF—[*Sticks his head in the doorway.*] I was just looking to see if his excellency was coming. [*He vanishes. The sound of the grating descending is heard.*]

JUHASZ—Now then . . . I'll see you home myself, Paula.

PAULA—Don't bother, Mr. Juhasz. I live quite near, you know.

JUHASZ—No matter. And I'm not in a hurry to-night anyway.

ADOLF—[*Finished with the door.*] If you please, Mr. Juhasz, your maid telephoned a while ago to ask why you were so late. Your supper is getting spoiled.

PAULA—There, you see. . . . Please don't bother about me.

JUHASZ—Not at all . . . [*To* ADOLF.] Phone and tell her that I shan't be home for supper to-night. I'll go to a restaurant. [ADOLF *exits through the archway.*]

PAULA—You are quite right. . . . The empty house and the vacant place at table . . .

JUHASZ—Not that, but . . . you see . . . my wife is very fond of asparagus . . . and it's out of season and hard to get. . . . This afternoon I got some . . . the first asparagus to arrive in the city. . . . And I sent it home . . . for supper . . . a surprise, you know . . . Well . . . now . . . if I go home . . . what can I say to the maid? . . . Shall I stand there and be ashamed . . . of the asparagus? [*A brief pause.*] Or shall I eat it myself?

ADOLF—[*In the archway.*] I am putting out the lights, Mr. Juhasz.

JUHASZ—[*To* PAULA, *who is about to go.*] One moment. [*To* ADOLF.] Wait, my son, there is something I promised you. [*He takes the toy steamship from under the counter, at right. He stands behind the counter.* ADOLF *comes down in front of it.*] Now, look here, my son. See this little lid? You lift it up like that. See?

ADOLF—Yes, sir.

JUHASZ—[*Begins in a matter-of-fact way, but gradually his voice grows more sorrowful until, in the end, it is trembling with suppressed sobs.*] In here are two keys. This one winds up the wheels when you want the ship to run along the floor. This one winds up the propeller. See . . . that is the propeller. It makes the ship move through the water . . . if there is any water. The thing to remember is that you mustn't turn the key backwards, for then the spring unwinds. And when you wind it, you must wind it very slowly, just as you wind a watch, very slowly. . . . [*He turns the key three times while* ADOLF *watches absorbedly. Nothing is heard but the click of the turning cog-wheels as the curtain slowly, almost imperceptibly, falls.*]

ACT TWO

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[*The* COUNT'S *workroom in a little outbuilding devoted to the business of the estate. A wide glass door back center, with a window on either side of it, looks on a terrace and a quaint old garden beyond. At the right and left are doors to other offices.*

Up right stands the COUNT'S *huge desk and in front of it, to the right, a small table on which is a typewriting machine. Up left is a long table covered with a litter of papers, books and pamphlets. Down left, against the wall, stands a little sofa.*

It is a bright summer morning. The COUNT *sits at his desk.* DOMOKOS, *an elderly clerk, is making a report to him.*]

DOMOKOS—And about that fellow, Mate. He's the most useless man about the place. An absolute disgrace to the dairy.

COUNT—And the favorite of Mr. Juhasz.

DOMOKOS—Yes, excellency. I'd have discharged Mate long ago, but Mr. Juhasz won't let me. He's sorry for the man.

COUNT—Sorry for him!

DOMOKOS—Mate has such a glib tongue he always manages to get around Mr. Juhasz somehow. But this time . . . he hadn't turned up for three days.

This morning he reported for work again, looking very seedy. But this time we've caught him right. I found this letter . . . [*exhibits the letter*] which proves beyond a doubt that Mate is the paid spy of our competitor, Baron Goldberger.

COUNT—Goldberger!

DOMOKOS—Yes, of Baron Goldberger.

COUNT—Not *Baron* Goldberger. . . . . .

DOMOKOS—Pardon me . . . no. Of Goldberger. And, if Mr. Juhasz doesn't discharge him now . .

COUNT—I'll see to it. Where is this Mate? [*He rings.*]

DOMOKOS—I told him to wait out there in the little office. [*Points to the left.*]

COUNT—Give me that letter. [DOMOKOS *gives it to him.* SANTHA, *an old man, half clerk, half servant, enters at left; waits at the door.*] Send Mate in.

SANTHA—Yes, your excellency.

COUNT—Then ask Miss Paula to step in.

SANTHA—Yes, your excellency. [*Exits at left.*]

DOMOKOS—Mr. Juhasz is spoiling all the men with that benevolence of his. [MATE *enters at left. He is young; wears a white linen jacket which is soiled and torn. Behind him* SANTHA *enters and crosses to right, where he exits.*]

COUNT—I am told you have been neglecting your work and going off on a spree for days at a time.

MATE—I was home . . . sick, excellency. And Mr. Juhasz . . .

DOMOKOS—You were seen in a beer garden in Budapest three different times.

COUNT—That will do, Mate. Wait out there until you are sent for. Mr. Juhasz will attend to you.

MATE—Excellency, I give you my word——
[SANTHA *is seen crossing the garden from right to left.*]

COUNT—That will do, Mate. [MATE *exits at left. The* COUNT *rises.*] Thank you, Domokos. Let me have the rest of your report this afternoon. . . . I am busy now. Leave that letter here. [*Rings.*] Where is Juhasz?

DOMOKOS—I saw him down near the hothouses. I think he's feeding the pigeons.

COUNT—Naturally.

DOMOKOS—Yes, sir. [*He exits at left as* PAULA *enters at right.*]

PAULA—Good morning!

COUNT—Good morning, sunbeam. Quick, quick. We can talk now. Your duenna is away . . . feeding the pigeons.

PAULA—Your excellency is always saying unkind things about Mr. Juhasz. [*She sits at the typewriting machine.*]

COUNT—And yet I love him as I would my own son. [*Kisses* PAULA'S *hand.*]

PAULA—I must pretend to be working. If he comes in and finds me just talking to you, he'll be unhappy again.

COUNT—No fear of that now. . . . He is a long way from here.

PAULA—As if that mattered! He divines the fact that we are together. And he can find me with his eyes shut. [*Taps once or twice on the machine.*] Please don't let him catch us like this.

COUNT—This is intolerable, Paula. It can't go on. One of the reasons I sent for you was to tell you that I mean to get rid of Juhasz to-day.

PAULA—[*Sorrowfully.*] Your excellency . . .

COUNT—There is a dairyman named Mate, a wholly untrustworthy fellow, whom he won't dismiss. That gives me a perfect excuse, and I intend to make use of it. For I can't let this sort of thing go on indefinitely. He's always on your heels like a watch-dog, and I'm sick of it. . . . It isn't enough that he's practically useless around the place . . . but he demoralizes everything with that benevolence of his . . . my dignity . . . even my cheese. . . . And to crown it all he makes me play the comedian in my own house. In order to be alone with you I must give you dictation. And in order to give you

dictation I must make political speeches. . . . And I detest political speeches. . . .

PAULA—[*Listening.*] Wasn't that the door? He's just come in the anteroom. Dictate to me! Hurry!

COUNT—It's enough to drive a man to despair. [*Loudly, as* PAULA *types.*] "If the Minister of Agriculture supposes . . . that the farmers of the country will tolerate . . . such a thing, he is gravely mistaken." I'll discharge him. I'll discharge him this very day. . . . No. . . . Don't write that . . . I don't mean the minister.

PAULA—[*As she writes.*] Don't be unkind to him. . . . He's such a dear, gentle soul.

COUNT—[*Loudly.*] The tiller of the soil asks little of his Government. . . .

PAULA—[*As she writes.*] It's sheer gratitude that makes him guard me so faithfully, gratitude to me for having come here with him.

COUNT—I've put up with his gratitude until I'm weary of it. It's four months since you came here. Do you realize it? Four months you have tormented me . . . on his account. Four months you have been postponing my happiness from day to day . . . on his account.

PAULA—You must be patient a little longer. He'll go of his own accord . . . as soon as he gets his fifty-one thousand kronen from Berlin. Meantime,

I can't let you be unkind to him . . . no . . . not on my account.

COUNT—He'll never get the money. And I can't wait. I am fifty-six, Paula, and desperately in love . . . in love, do you hear. . . . [*Comes nearer to her.*] You beautiful . . . young . . . thing! [JUHASZ *enters at left with a big ledger under his arm.*]

JUHASZ—I beg pardon. Shall I check up the live-stock too?

COUNT—[*Crossly.*] Yes. [*To* PAULA.] "The deplorable policies inaugurated by the Minister of Agriculture . . ." [PAULA *types.*] By the way, Miss, is that detailed statement finished?

PAULA—Your excellency, my eyes have been troubling me . . . and . . . I have only finished with the summaries. [*Hands him a sheaf of closely written documents.*]

COUNT—[*Affecting severity.*] You must manage to get more work done, Miss Paula. Please be sure to have the detailed statements ready for me by this evening. [JUHASZ *exits at left.*]

PAULA—He heard you as he came in. I'm sure he heard you! . . . Oh, I'm so sorry!

COUNT—You needn't be. It doesn't matter any more. I shan't let him hinder me any longer. I can't afford to. I'm too old. The only thing left to do is pay the fifty-one thousand kronen, give him back his shop and be rid of him.

PAULA—He won't accept it. He'd rather starve.

COUNT—[*With a touch of exasperation.*] Curious that your friends never have such scruples, only your enemies.

PAULA—Have you noticed how badly he looks? That's from worrying about me.

COUNT—It's from staying up nights, pacing to and fro beneath my window. He has the bad taste to suppose that I would seduce one of my employees in my own house. . . . But . . . sunbeam . . . our love deserves a worthier setting . . . doesn't it? . . . A flight to Paris by the swiftest motor we can find . . . and from there southward to the sea . . . under the skies of Spain that God only made for people to love under . . . [*Comes nearer to her.* JUHASZ *enters at left.*]

JUHASZ—I beg pardon. I only wanted to give Miss Paula these.

COUNT—[*Crossly.*] Certainly. Certainly.

JUHASZ—[*Gives* PAULA *a bundle of closely written pages.*] Here are the detailed statements his excellency wants. Mr. Santha was kind enough to get them up last night.

PAULA—He did them for me? [*Looks at the pages; smiles; to the* COUNT.] Forty pages, all closely written. Oh, that dear Mr. Santha! I don't know how to thank him. [*Gives the pages to the* COUNT.]

COUNT—[*Looks at them.*] Mr. Santha wrote these?

PAULA—Wasn't it darling of him? Think of it! He must have worked all night, the poor——

COUNT—[*Comparing them with the summaries.*] Curious how like these are the ones you wrote yourself.

PAULA—Oh, I may as well confess it, your excellency. I didn't write those either. Mr. Juhasz did.

COUNT—Oh? Juhasz did?

JUHASZ—It was only three pages . . . and Miss Paula's eyes bothered her.

COUNT—[*With a sheaf of pages in each hand.*] So, then, Juhasz wrote these three pages, and Santha wrote these forty?

PAULA—Yes.

COUNT—[*He rings.* SANTHA *enters.*] Wait a moment, Santha. [*To* JUHASZ.] There was a light in your room until four this morning. What were you doing up so late?

JUHASZ—I'm not a very successful liar, excellency. I wrote the detailed statements too. . . .

COUNT—Thank you, Santha. You may go. [*He throws the statements on the table.* SANTHA *exits at left.*]

PAULA—I am very grateful to you, Mr. Juhasz.

JUHASZ—Oh, I am glad to have been of service. [*He exits at left.*]

COUNT—Tell me . . . isn't this Juhasz in love with you?

PAULA—[*In honest amazement.*] How can you say such a thing? It is nothing but his goodness, his exaggerated sense of gratitude. He thinks he owes me his aid and his protection because I followed him here into exile.

COUNT—I'll exile him for good this time. Wait and see.

PAULA—You won't be unkind to him . . . please . . . don't be.

COUNT—Don't worry. . . . I'll be absolutely just with him. I'll simply confront him with the case of this fellow Mate whom he can't bring himself to dismiss. And I'll say to him, "Now, it's Mate or you." And as it is perfectly certain that he will never be able to harden his heart to the point of dismissing anyone, he'll have no alternative but to go himself. And then . . . [*ardently*] my happiness begins . . . and yours, Paula . . . for you are my last love . . . and last love is like the setting sun . . . full of fire and gold. . . . [*He approaches her ardently.* JUHASZ *enters at left, a big book under his arm.*]

JUHASZ—The swine aren't entered in the books.

COUNT—Oh! . . . There's a limit to everything! [*Goes to the door at left, calling angrily.*] Mr. Santha! Didn't I say I was not to be disturbed

while dictating? Where is the fellow! [*Exits at left, leaving the door open.*]

JUHASZ—[*To* PAULA, *quickly.*] I heard all the dreadful things he said to you. And it's my fault. I brought you here.

PAULA—But, Mr. Juhasz——

JUHASZ—I brought you here . . . and now I don't know what to do. . . . I . . . I'll talk to him . . . and forbid him to——

PAULA—Please, Mr. Juhasz, don't do anything of the kind!

JUHASZ—He wants to get rid of me anyhow. I know I'm in his way . . . because he wants you . . . But don't worry, my child, I shan't let him *drive* me away. [*The* COUNT *enters at left.*]

COUNT—Absolutely demoralized! All of them.

JUHASZ—The swine . . .

COUNT—Don't bother me now with your swine. Come back later. [JUHASZ *exits at left.*]

COUNT—It gets worse all the time. He used to give us at least a few minutes together, but now he keeps popping in like a—— [*Stops, enraged, for a word.*]

PAULA—He heard what you said to me before.

COUNT—Did he say anything to you?

PAULA—He promised to . . . watch you closer than ever . . . from now on.

COUNT—That's an insult to you! Why don't you forbid it?

PAULA—I thought of doing it, but when he looks at you . . . with those soft, kind eyes of his——

COUNT—I know. He has eyes like a devoted horse. I can't endure them either. . . . But now I've had enough. The thing must end to-day. If he comes in once more, you must go out, my dear, and leave me alone with him.

PAULA—He won't come in again. You made it plain to him that he mustn't.

COUNT—You don't know him. He'll be in the moment he hears what he is listening for. I'm perfectly certain he's listening. [*Goes toward the door at left.*] Watch. [*Loudly.*] Paula, I wonder if you know how sweet, how charming, how utterly adorable you are. [*Approaches the door as he speaks.*] [JUHASZ *enters quickly, determinedly at left. When he sees the* COUNT *standing there, smiling sarcastically, he stops short in the doorway, abashed.*]

JUHASZ—May I talk to you about the swine now?

COUNT—Come in. [*To* PAULA, *sternly.*] Make a copy of what I have dictated, Miss Paula.

PAULA—Yes, sir. [*Rises, gathers up her papers.*]

COUNT—[*Sternly.*] A clean and correct copy.

PAULA—Yes, your excellency. [*She exits at right.*]

JUHASZ—The swine, your excellency——

COUNT—Never mind that, Juhasz. . . . There is something else I want to talk with you about. . . . There are many complaints against you. Very many!

JUHASZ—I know your excellency isn't satisfied with me.

COUNT—But my pigeons are satisfied, eh?

JUHASZ—Is that what you are displeased about, sir?

COUNT—You feed them too much. They are so fat they won't fly any more. And when I ask for a pigeon for my luncheon I am informed that Mr. Juhasz won't permit one to be killed.

JUHASZ—I'm so sorry for the poor soft little creatures. . . .

COUNT—And aren't you sorry for the poor soft little ox?

JUHASZ—I don't know him personally, sir.

COUNT—Humph!

JUHASZ—It doesn't seem right to me . . . to eat your personal acquaintances.

COUNT—[*Significantly.*] It does to me.

JUHASZ—If that's the only complaint . . .

COUNT—It isn't. There are many more. You and I will have to part company, Juhasz. I can't keep you here any longer. . . . Now every time I broach the subject . . . you look at me like that.

JUHASZ—[*Averts his eyes.*] I'm sorry, sir.

COUNT—[*Irritably.*] I once had a horse named Trafalgar. He was just like you.

JUHASZ—Like me?

COUNT—He broke his leg . . . and I couldn't have him shot because he used to look at me . . . exactly as you do. [*In spite of himself,* JUHASZ *looks at him.*] Don't look at me like that! I forbid it!

JUHASZ—[*Looking away.*] Yes, your excellency.

COUNT—[*Consults a memorandum.*] Here is a long list of your offenses. First, there's that potter, Mano Steiner, who owes us eight thousand kronen. You granted him an extension of one year. What for?

JUHASZ—Pots, your excellency.

COUNT—I know that.

JUHASZ—And the poor fellow has had so much trouble of late.

COUNT—Trouble?

JUHASZ—Business trouble.

COUNT—You have no right to be charitable at my expense.

JUHASZ—Wasn't there some other complaint, too, sir?

COUNT—Yes, lots of them. [*Consults the memorandum.*] You owe three hundred and thirty kronen to the all-night café.

JUHASZ—Not for myself, excellency.

COUNT—I know. You assumed that fellow Mate's debts. And now that he has credit again he has resumed his drinking.

JUHASZ—Oh, your excellency, he didn't owe the three hundred and thirty kronen for drinks.

COUNT—For what, then?

JUHASZ—For hard-boiled eggs.

COUNT—Is that what he told you? Let me see. That would make 640 hard-boiled eggs in a single month. Or twenty-one a day.

JUHASZ—Yes, the poor fellow has to eat twenty-two every day. The doctor has put him on an egg diet. . . . But that bill at the café is paid.

COUNT—Juhasz, Juhasz, it's sinful the way you let people rob you. I suppose you haven't a heller to your name.

JUHASZ—Well, just at present——

COUNT—I thought so.

JUHASZ—What is next on the list, your excellency?

COUNT—The next is very serious. It concerns your protégé, Mate. We have discovered that he is Goldberger's spy.

JUHASZ—I don't believe it, sir.

COUNT—[*Picks up a letter.*] Perhaps this letter, written in his own hand, may convince you. It is written to Goldberger, acknowledging the receipt of two hundred kronen in payment for a full list of

our customers. . . . There is no possible doubt about it now. . . . The foreman wanted the man discharged a month ago, but you refused to permit it.

JUHASZ—But I didn't know he had done this, your excellency.

COUNT—Well, you know it now. And I trust you have no further doubt that the man must be dismissed.

JUHASZ—Well . . . if he has done this . . . then . . . I think the foreman ought to dismiss him.

COUNT—The foreman ought? Oh, no, Juhasz! You'll dismiss him yourself.

JUHASZ—[*Aghast.*] I?

COUNT—It's your last chance. Here is the letter. [*Gives it to him.*] Mate is waiting out there. You will tell him he is dismissed. [*Rings.*] I'll be back in five minutes. If Mate is dismissed I'll be willing to believe that there is some hope you may mend your ways. If he's not dismissed, then, my son, you and I part company. [SANTHA *enters.*] Send Mate in here. [SANTHA *exits at left.*] Five minutes!

JUHASZ—Excellency, may I ask one favor?

COUNT—Well?

JUHASZ—Make it . . . ten minutes. It's not so easy for me.

COUNT—Very good. Ten minutes. [*Takes out his watch.*] What time have you got?

JUHASZ—[*Takes out his watch.*] Ten-thirty.

COUNT—At ten-forty Mate is dismissed or you leave this place to-day. [*He exits at back. Left alone,* JUHASZ *scratches his head ruefully.* PAULA *enters at right.*]

JUHASZ—For goodness' sake, Paula . . . don't come in now . . . every moment is precious. . . . [*Pushes her gently toward the door at right.*]

PAULA—What's the matter?

JUHASZ—I've no time to lose now. . . . I've got to hurt someone . . . very much . . . in order to be able to stay near you . . . and protect you. Don't ask me. [*Pushes her toward the door.*]

PAULA—What has happened? [MATE *enters at right.*]

JUHASZ—The Count thinks he knows me. But this time I'll show him he's wrong. Give me your hand. Give me strength. [*Clasps her hand.*] Go now, Paula, and rely on me. . . . You shall see how strong I can be. In ten minutes it will be over. [PAULA *exits at right.* JUHASZ *closes the door behind her, pauses a moment to collect his courage, then, without turning to face* MATE, *bellows at him.*] So there you are!

MATE—I've got regards for you, boss, from Budapest. I was in your shop.

JUHASZ—Never mind that now.

MATE—I bought a necktie there. [*Shows his cravat.*] Maybe you recognize it. The people all sent their regards.

JUHASZ—Never mind that now, please. . . . [*Fingers the cravat.*] Thanks, but we have something else to discuss just now.

MATE—[*Genially.*] They told me business was fine. . . . And they are all expecting you back soon.

JUHASZ—Now, Mate, please don't keep interrupting. I've something very serious—— [*Flourishes the letter.*] You have caused me a great deal of trouble, Mate.

MATE—[*Smoothly.*] Oh, don't say that, boss! I'd rather be dead than cause you any trouble.

JUHASZ—[*Distressed.*] Now don't talk like that——

MATE—But, if——

JUHASZ—[*With determination.*] Be still now. And let me talk.

MATE—[*With an injured expression.*] All right.

JUHASZ—[*Relenting.*] Or . . . what were you going to say?

MATE—[*Aggrieved.*] Oh, nothing.

JUHASZ—I didn't mean to be rude. I am a bit excited, you see. [*Flourishes the letter.*] This letter was just handed to me. [*Looks at it.*] You took . . . two hundred kronen . . . from Baron Gold-

berger. [*Shows it to him.*] Is this your handwriting?

MATE—If you say it is——

JUHASZ—Mate, don't make it harder for me. It's painful enough as it is. And I have so little time. . . . Is this your handwriting?

MATE—Well, yes.

JUHASZ—There, you see! [*A brief pause. He looks at his watch.*]

MATE—Well, I know what to expect. Get it over with.

JUHASZ—You are a traitor, Mate. This letter proves it.

MATE—That's all right. You can discharge me if you want to.

JUHASZ—Why do you make it harder for me, Mate? Do you think I like to do this? . . . You don't even say a word in your own defense.

MATE—What's the use of my saying anything? I know that I've got the sack.

JUHASZ—But how could you do such a thing? *Why* did you do it? *Why?*

MATE—If I told you, you wouldn't believe me. I'm a liar, I am. Everybody says so.

JUHASZ—Don't be so pig-headed! Did you . . . perhaps . . . need the money for something urgent? . . . You haven't a family, have you?

MATE—I have a crippled father.

JUHASZ—There! I knew there was something. Why didn't you say so? Have you no faith in me? [*Fingers* MATE's *cravat.*] What did they ask you for this necktie?

MATE—Four kronen.

JUHASZ—Why, it only sells for three!

MATE—I only paid two. . . . There are so many wicked people in the world, Mr. Juhasz. I'd have been a different man if I'd 'a been treated right . . . but I wasn't. . . . Everybody around here was always down on me. . . . And now they've got me where they want me. . . .

JUHASZ—[*With heat.*] Have they? Not yet. Make no mistake about that. [*Pumping up his determination.*] So you have a crippled father?

MATE—Yes, my poor father!

JUHASZ—It seems to me I heard you were an orphan.

MATE—They say all kinds of things about me around here. My father lives in Szentes. If you can call it living. [*Working himself up into a passion.*] If you must know, I sent the two hundred kronen to him.

JUHASZ—[*Eagerly.*] Can you prove that?

MATE—Certainly.

JUHASZ—How?

MATE—By this. [*Shows him a photograph.*]

JUHASZ—By this? This is a photograph.

MATE—Of my father. The picture of my poor old father.

JUHASZ—But this is a photograph of the actor, Girardi.

MATE—They resemble each other a lot. Everybody says so.

JUHASZ—[*Thoughtfully.*] Hum! And what does this prove?

MATE—That he's the one . . . I sent the dirty money to.

JUHASZ—[*Undeceived.*] No, Mate. You are lying to me. [*Returns the photograph to him.*] This is unpardonable. . . . They were perfectly right in what they said about you. [*Looks at his watch.*] You are dismissed, Mate . . . and now you may go. [*Does not trust himself to look at* MATE, *but gives him a shove toward the door.*]

MATE—[*Kisses the photograph.*] Poor father! Who'll send you money now . . . the first of every month?

JUHASZ—[*Greatly distressed.*] Please . . . stop that . . . and go!

MATE—And my poor little girl . . . who'll feed her now?

JUHASZ—You have a child, too? . . . I don't want to hear about it.

MATE—I didn't say anything to you. [*Starts to go.*] My poor, sick little girl!

JUHASZ—[*Restrains him; greatly distressed.*] Is she ill?

MATE—What do you care?

JUHASZ—How old is she?

MATE—[*Dries his eyes.*] Two years old. Her mother is dead. We planted flowers on her grave.

JUHASZ—This is harrowing. . . . I know you are lying again. . . . I mustn't listen to you. [*Looks at his watch.*]

MATE—A little blonde baby. With hair like flax.

JUHASZ—Ten-thirty-six. You are dismissed. [*Puts his hands over his ears.*]

MATE—She always says to me, "Papa . . . Papa send money."

JUHASZ—I'm not listening to you. . . . You are lying. . . . But I can't hear you.

MATE—My poor innocent angel. Her medicines alone cost me . . . Oh, how *can* a man go straight when he has a crippled father and a sick baby to keep?

JUHASZ—[*Takes his hands from his ears.*] I didn't hear you. . . . You are dismissed.

MATE—The doctor prescribed sulphur for her . . . and milk.

JUHASZ—I'm not listening.

MATE—No. . . . But I wish I knew how to close my ears when my poor hungry baby cries, "Papa, papa. . . ."

JUHASZ—[*At the end of his endurance.*] Liar! . . . You are dismissed. . . . [*Reconsiders it, angrily.*] You are not dismissed! Oh, how can I tell whether you are lying or not?

MATE—[*Low, reproachfully.*] Oh, Mr. Juhasz!

JUHASZ—[*Angrily.*] Be still! [*Less angrily.*] Sit down. [*Less angrily yet.*] Have a cigarette.

MATE—[*Drying his eyes.*] I only smoke cigars.

JUHASZ—[*Crossly pushes the humidor toward him.*] There! [MATE *takes one.*] Not those. . . . [*Shouts.*] Take a Havana. [MATE *sticks several in his pocket.*] Stop that crying. . . . And tell me instead, whether you are lying to me or not.

MATE—[*Snivelling.*] When all a man earns is eighty kronen a month . . .

JUHASZ—I know, I know.

MATE—And has to send forty to his father, and thirty to his sick boy . . . [*as* JUHASZ *makes a gesture of surprise*] I mean girl . . . what has he got left? Ten kronen! Can you live on ten kronen a month?

JUHASZ—It's terrible, I know . . . Mate . . . [*Scratches his head in bewilderment.*] I wish I knew what to do.

MATE—If I had anything left to pawn . . . but I haven't.

JUHASZ—[*Feels involuntarily for his watch*

chain.] If I had any money myself . . . But just at present . . . I regret to say. . . .

MATE—[*His eyes fixed on* JUHASZ's *chain.*] If I had a watch . . . or a chain . . .

JUHASZ—[*Takes out his watch.*] What's the matter with your baby?

MATE—It's anæmic.

JUHASZ—Poor child! [*Takes his watch off the chain.*]

MATE—[*Watching him greedily.*] That comes from being undernourished.

JUHASZ—[*Gives him the watch.*] What the child needs is plenty of fresh milk.

MATE—[*Regarding the watch in his palm with pretended amazement.*] What's this?

JUHASZ—A gold watch.

MATE—[*Offers to return it.*] But, please——

JUHASZ—Stop annoying me! [*Pushes it back.*] The pawnbroker will lend you a hundred kronen on it. . . . Some day, when you have the money, you can redeem it.

MATE—But, Mr. Juhasz——

JUHASZ—Take it. You can't get anything on the chain. It's plated.

MATE—[*Pockets the watch. His voice is tearful.*] People like you, Mr. Juhasz, give a man faith again.

JUHASZ—Stop your crying. . . . I'll speak to his

excellency about you. Maybe I can persuade him to keep you on.

MATE—He's a good-hearted man. . . . I'd have spoken to him myself only—— [*With a hopeless gesture he indicates his tattered coat.*] I couldn't let him see me in this condition.

JUHASZ—[*Grasps both lapels of his own coat; despairingly.*] The man will have the coat off my back!

MATE—[*Takes a protesting stride toward him.*] But Mr. Juhasz . . . you don't suppose that I——

JUHASZ—No, no . . . but stop talking like that . . . or I'll have to take it off. . . . Merciful heaven! To think that such poverty exists in our very midst!

MATE—[*Weeping.*] You have made a better man of me, Mr. Juhasz.

JUHASZ—There . . . there, my boy . . . don't worry . . . everything will be all right. . . . Just rely on me. . . . I'll take care of you. [*Puts an arm about him; his voice quavers with tenderness and pity.*] Come what may, I'll help you. [*The* COUNT *appears in the doorway at back.*] We'll overlook what you have done . . . and I'll see to it that your wages are raised. [*The* COUNT *enters. Seeing him,* JUHASZ *lets his arm fall from* MATE'S *shoulder. There is a pause.*]

COUNT—Is this the way you dismiss the man, Mr. Juhasz?

JUHASZ—[*In great embarrassment.*] Your excellency . . .

COUNT—I gave you ten minutes to do it in. What time is it now?

JUHASZ—[*Involuntarily feels for his watch.*] The ten minutes . . . are up, sir.

COUNT—Where's your watch?

JUHASZ—My watch? . . . Er . . .

COUNT—You had it ten minutes ago. [*To* MATE.] Have *you* got it? [MATE *nods, abashed.*] Give it here. [MATE *gives it to him.*] Now get out of here. And don't let me see your face about my place again. [MATE *slinks out at left.*] So you forgave him? [JUHASZ *is silent.*] And promised to raise his wages? [JUHASZ *is silent.*] And gave him the watch you got from me ten years ago?

JUHASZ—Excellency, I couldn't help it. . . . I can't bear to see people suffer.

COUNT—Juhasz, you can't stay here any longer. I'll give you six months' wages in lieu of notice.

JUHASZ—I don't want to be paid for leaving. . . . I'll go just the same. . . .

COUNT—[*Crossly.*] I can't send you away without a kreutzer to your name! What the devil *is* one to do with you? Anyone else in your place would have been thrown out bodily, but you! . . . [*Roars at him.*] Am I to throw you out because you have the disposition of a saint!

JUHASZ—You needn't throw me out, sir. I'm going of my own account.

COUNT—[*Angrily.*] Hold your tongue! You are too damned good for this world!

JUHASZ—[*Pacifyingly.*] You oughtn't excite yourself, excellency. . . . There is really no need for it . . . and you might bring on a stroke——

COUNT—It's all very well to be soft-hearted and charitable and forgiving. I'd like to be that way myself. But it's a luxury I can't afford.

JUHASZ—I'm no use around here. . . . I know that, sir——

COUNT—[*Shouts.*] Don't look at me like that! This is unheard of! I come in with the fixed intention of giving you the sack, and here I am—— Unheard of! [*Angrier yet.*] Now I'm the Juhasz! [*Roars.*] Do you expect me to send you away because you try to help everybody who is in trouble?

JUHASZ—A man like me does more harm around the place than a hundred lazy workmen. . . . You mustn't consider me, sir. . . . I'll be all right. I'll go somewhere and wait until my money comes . . . from Berlin. Then I'll have my shop back. [*He raises his eyes to the* COUNT, *then recollects that it is forbidden.*] I beg pardon. [*He turns his back.*]

COUNT—Such credulity! Such optimism! [*Goes up to him.*] You are the most absurd old baby I ever—— You can look at me now . . . you soft-

hearted [JUHASZ *looks at him*] old lamb, you. . . . The only thing to do with you . . . is . . . hug you. [*Puts an arm affectionately around* JUHASZ's *shoulder.* PAULA *enters at right. Seeing her, the* COUNT *withdraws his arm. There is a brief pause.*] I'm a fine dismisser myself! [*To* JUHASZ.] Run along, my son . . . go out to your pigeons . . . and tell them that the old master can't eat his personal acquaintances either. [JUHASZ *flashes* PAULA *a triumphant glance and exits quickly at left.*]

PAULA—If I had come in a minute later you'd have been kissing him.

COUNT—Quite likely. It's no use. I can't get rid of him.

PAULA—I've thought of a way.

COUNT—To get him out of here?

PAULA—Yes, and of his own free will.

COUNT—It isn't possible.

PAULA—It is. But it will cost a great deal.

COUNT—I'll pay whatever it costs.

PAULA—Mr. Juhasz can have his shop back by paying fifty-one thousand kronen to the attorney for his creditors.

COUNT—But, my dear, you said yourself that he'd never let me pay it for him.

PAULA—Yes, but he is not to know that you are paying it.

COUNT—Who then——

PAULA—He must be made to believe that the money was sent by the person from whom he's expecting it. From Oscar Mezei . . . in Berlin.

COUNT—I see. Not bad!

PAULA—Very simple. Have your cashier put fifty-one thousand kronen in an envelope and with it a notification that the money comes from a Berlin bank. Can he do that?

COUNT—[*Enthusiastically.*] I'll make him do it. And as soon as Juhasz gets the money——

PAULA—He will hurry with it to the city . . . to pay off his creditors . . . and take over his shop . . . and stay in it.

COUNT—If we hurry, perhaps we can get him off by the noon train. I'll see the cashier at once. The whole thing shouldn't take more than ten minutes to fabricate. . . . You have made me very happy, dear. This clever plan of yours is the first real intimation that you, too, want to be rid of Juhasz.

PAULA—Rid of him! That's a hideous way to put it.

COUNT—Put it as you like, the fact is there. It is perfectly natural for me to be impatient . . . but for you to be is . . . charming.

PAULA—It isn't impatience . . . as much as . . . uneasiness. When I look at him . . . sometimes . . . I feel a twinge of doubt. When I see how pathetically he tries to protect me . . . from you

. . . I get a twinge of remorse. It will be different when he has gone. . . . Yet I shouldn't want to see him go empty handed. . . . And neither would I want him . . . ever to find out that——

COUNT—Rely on me. The papers shall be forged carefully enough to deceive a bank president. I'll go to the cashier this minute. . . . Paula, you have made me very happy. [*He takes her hand and kisses it.*] If I were twenty years younger I suppose I would have kissed you on that red, young mouth of yours.

PAULA—Careful! Someone is coming.

COUNT—[*Still holding her hand; is about to kiss her.*] No. . . .

PAULA—I heard the outer door.

COUNT—Nonsense! [*As he bends toward her again* JUHASZ *enters at left.*]

JUHASZ—Excellency, some of the pigeons have flown away.

COUNT—[*Does not resent this interruption; very jovially.*] No matter, Juhasz, they'll come back. [*He exits at left. There is a pause.*]

JUHASZ—He touched you. . . . He touched you with his hands.

PAULA—He kissed my hand.

JUHASZ—If I hadn't come in he would have kissed your cheek. This can't go on, you poor child, you are in serious danger.

PAULA—Aren't you exaggerating, Mr. Juhasz?

JUHASZ—Is it possible you don't understand that he is trying to make you his mistress?

PAULA—It takes two to make that bargain, Mr. Juhasz.

JUHASZ—Two to make it, but only one to repent it. . . . You don't seem to realize the game he is playing with you.

PAULA—He has always behaved like a gentleman with me.

JUHASZ—That is the most dangerous part of it. These rich people have such fine manners . . . they are like silkworms . . . they spin a fine soft thread around a poor girl . . . and she never realizes what they are about . . . until one day she wakes up and finds herself . . . dressed in silk. . . . But I won't let that happen to you. And the Count knows it. That is why he is trying to get rid of me.

PAULA—Why, he loves you like a son. Just now he was embracing you.

JUHASZ—But he'll send me away, sooner or later. I know that. And this is what I want to say to you. Philip telegraphed that he is coming down to see me this afternoon. I'm going back to the city with him. I might as well before I'm driven out. And you are coming with me.

PAULA—I?

JUHASZ—Yes. You can't stay here any longer. It is too dangerous for you.

PAULA—Dangerous! That's perfectly absurd.

JUHASZ—Haven't I seen and heard enough to know? All his advances! All his proposals! Have you ever seen a little bird fluttering helplessly about in a lion's cage?

PAULA—No.

JUHASZ—Neither have I. But I imagine it must be like you are here. . . . I am going to take you out of here, my child.

PAULA—That's awfully good of you, Mr. Juhasz, but——

JUHASZ—Do you *want* to stay here?

PAULA—I see no reason why I shouldn't.

JUHASZ—I am the better judge of that. And I shan't let you stay.

PAULA—I appreciate your motives, Mr. Juhasz. But pardon me if I say you have no right to decide whether I may stay or go.

JUHASZ—No right? Didn't I bring you here . . . into this danger?

PAULA—Perhaps I came . . . of my own accord.

JUHASZ—I see. His insidious poison has begun to work on you already. Well, Paula, I won't have it that way. You have never seen me determined yet. . . . Perhaps I never was before. . . . But I

am now. . . . Paula [*with a burst of courage*], I'll take you with me by force if necessary.

PAULA—I repeat . . . you have no right to do that.

JUHASZ—[*At a loss for the moment.*] No right . . . no right?

PAULA—You are not my father . . . or any relation of mine.

JUHASZ—I . . . I . . .

PAULA—I used to work for you . . . and I respect you deeply . . . but apart from that——

JUHASZ—I love you, Paula.

PAULA—Yes, but——

JUHASZ—You don't understand, Paula. [*Pauses a moment before he repeats very simply and earnestly.*] I love you. [*A pause.*] That is why I dared to say such things. [*A pause.*]

PAULA—Why, Mr. Juhasz——

JUHASZ—You are surprised. . . . You thought I kept watch over you quite unselfishly . . . like a brother. . . . Well, so I did . . . at first. . . . I used to pace up and down beneath the Count's window . . . all night long . . . without a thought in my mind except to keep you from harm. . . . Sometimes I was tired and sleepy . . . but there I stayed . . . under his window . . . because it was my duty to protect you . . . and then . . . gradually . . . I began to realize . . . that I liked to watch . . .

that I was never tired or sleepy any more . . . my whole attitude had changed . . . but I didn't tell you . . . I still pretended to be guarding you . . . only because I had your interest at heart . . . while all the time it was because I loved you. . . . And now . . . you can send me away, if you like.

PAULA—Mr. Juhasz . . . I don't know . . . I really don't know what to say.

JUHASZ—You never guessed it.

PAULA—I would never have believed it, if you hadn't——

JUHASZ—I didn't mean to tell you. But when you said I had no right . . . it slipped out. . . . I might have gone on pretending. . . . I don't know. . . . But now I can ask you again . . . to come with me . . . if you will . . . as my wife. [*A pause.*] Won't you answer me?

PAULA—I have been pretending, too, Mr. Juhasz.

JUHASZ—You?

PAULA—I let you think I came here . . . out of loyalty to you. But I didn't. I came because I wanted to come . . . because I am bad and depraved. And that is why I want to stay. . . . I am sick of poverty, Mr. Juhasz. . . . I don't want to go back to work in a dingy little office . . . of a dingy little shop. . . . I am young, Mr. Juhasz, and pretty. . . . I want to do the things that make living worth while . . . meet interesting people . . .

see beautiful places . . . wear fine clothes . . . enjoy the leisure and luxury that only rich folks can have. . . . I have thought about such things . . . and longed for them so fiercely . . . that it makes me cold and sick . . . only to think that I may not have them. . . . Oh, it's so difficult to tell you, Mr. Juhasz! My heart is so heavy!

JUHASZ—Do you . . . love the count?

PAULA—No.

JUHASZ—Tell me the truth. . . . You can tell me now.

PAULA—He isn't a man to me at all. He is only the door that leads into a new life. . . . He is rich, Mr. Juhasz, rich, rich—— [*Hides her face in shame on his shoulder.*]

JUHASZ—[*Half dazed.*] Come with me . . . and I will be rich, too. . . . I will work for you, Paula, as no man ever worked before. . . . There are people who will help me. . . . I will be ambitious, grasping . . . until I have all the money you want. . . .

PAULA—[*Still has her face buried in his shoulder.*] And by the time you had made your money I should be too old to want it.

JUHASZ—[*Bitterly.*] After all, you are right, Paula. I am absurd. Another man would offer to lay down his life for the woman he loved. . . . I offer to open an account in a savings bank. [*She raises her head. There is a knock at the door.*]

Come in. [*Louder.*] Come in! [SANTHA *enters at left, carrying an envelope and two receipts.*]

SANTHA—Pardon me, Mr. Juhasz, but the cashier sent this in. Will you sign this receipt, please?

JUHASZ—Yes. . . . I'll be there in a moment.

SANTHA—You need only——

JUHASZ—Don't you see I'm busy? Tell the cashier I'll be there in a moment.

SANTHA—It isn't necessary. Just take this, and sign. [*Proffers the envelope and the receipts.*]

JUHASZ—[*Looks at them.*] Isn't this an error?

SANTHA—It is addressed to you.

JUHASZ—[*Reads.*] From the Deutsche Bank, of Berlin . . . to the Ungarische Allgemeine Creditbank . . . to the account of Mr. Peter Juhasz . . . from Mr. Oscar Mezei, of Berlin. . . . [*The hand holding the receipt sinks slowly.* JUHASZ *himself sinks into a chair, then raises the receipt to his eyes again, very slowly, as if his arm were tired.*] From Oscar Mezei, Berlin . . . fifty-one thousand kronen. [*He looks into the envelope; sees the sheaf of banknotes there.*] Didn't I tell you, Santha? I always said he'd send it. But you all laughed at me.

SANTHA—Will you sign the receipt, please?

JUHASZ—[*Rather dazed.*] Certainly. [*He signs.*]

SANTHA—[*Takes the signed receipt; leaves the*

other in JUHASZ's *hand.*] You keep this one. It's the duplicate.

JUHASZ—The duplicate . . . yes. Where are you going?

SANTHA—To give this back to the cashier.

JUHASZ—Oh, yes. Thank you, Santha.

SANTHA—Don't mention it, sir. [*He exits. There is a pause.* JUHASZ *stands at left.* PAULA *is at extreme right. He looks at her, still balancing the envelope full of banknotes on his palm.*]

PAULA—I congratulate you, Mr. Juhasz. [*He is silent.*] Now you can have your shop back, and everything will be all right for you.

JUHASZ—[*Crosses to her.*] Yes, Paula, now everything will be all right for me. And for you, too. For now I can give you the things you want . . . fine clothes and beautiful places and all the rest. . . . Take it, Paula.

PAULA—Mr. Juhasz . . . your shop, your creditors——

JUHASZ—What do I want the shop for now? Let the creditors sell it out. There will be more than enough to pay them.

PAULA—But that means your livelihood, your entire future!

JUHASZ—I love you, Paula. It is *your* future I am thinking of. You don't want to work in a shop . . . or be a shopkeeper's wife . . . you want to

live in luxury . . . well . . . here is money. Take it. [*Forces it into her hand.*] There! Close your hand. . . . Spend it . . . while it lasts . . . and then . . . if you still want to go on living that way . . . it willl be easy to get more money . . . too easy for a pretty girl like you. . . . But if you change your mind, Paula, if you change your mind, you can turn back . . . back to this ordinary life. . . . But if you took the Count's money, there could be no turning back. . . . Don't you see? . . . For when a girl's honor is gone . . . she can't turn back. . . . And you will want to turn back. . . . I am certain of that. . . . I know you, Paula. . . . You will want to turn back.

PAULA—[*Deeply moved.*] You would do this for me? You would give me everything you possess . . . and ask nothing in return?

JUHASZ—[*Throwing it off, with a whimsical smile.*] Everything I possess? So it is. Let the Count do as much for you if he's such a cavalier. [PAULA *offers him the money, mutely.*] No. We are going now . . . we shall both make the noon train to Budapest. . . . You will not stay here with the Count. . . . I see it in your eyes . . . in your tears. . . . You are saved, little Paula, . . . saved from your own folly. [*He has moved very close to her and has one hand on her shoulder when the* COUNT

enters. JUHASZ *drops his hand. There is a pause.*]

COUNT—Are you dictating, Juhasz?

JUHASZ—[*Cold, resolute but respectful.*] I have had very good news, your excellency. I am leaving on the noon express . . . and . . . [*looks at* PAULA] Miss Paula will tell you the rest. [*Head high, very sure of himself, he exits at right. There is a pause.*]

COUNT—What's the matter with the man? [PAULA *shows him the money.*] I don't understand.

PAULA—He gave it to me.

COUNT—I said he was in love with you.

PAULA—Here! [*She offers him the money.*]

COUNT—Why? What's this for?

PAULA—It's your money.

COUNT—No. . . . It belonged to Juhasz . . . and if he gave it to you . . . and you accepted it. . . .

PAULA—I didn't accept it. . . . I was too overcome to speak. This money means to him his shop, his future, the honor of his name . . . and yet he tossed it to me without a moment's hesitation. I never knew a man could love like that.

COUNT—What are you going to do with it?

PAULA—Give it back to him, of course.

COUNT—I wouldn't do that. . . . He'd only try to give it back to you again, or tear it up, or throw it away. . . . The man's in love with you, you know.

. . . I think it were wiser to send the money a once by telegraph to the attorney for his creditors. Then we'll be sure he will reap the benefit of it. We must give him back his shop . . . by force . . . if that's the only way he'll have it.

PAULA—You are right. You are perfectly right. I'll give the money to the cashier myself, and have him send it right off.

COUNT—I would. . . . Have you been crying, Paula?

PAULA—It wasn't exactly amusing . . . to have him offer to make a sacrifice like that . . . after all we had done to deceive him. [JUHASZ *enters at right. He is carrying his hat and umbrella.*]

JUHASZ—Doubtless your excellency knows everything. [PAULA *exits at left.*]

COUNT—No, Juhasz. All I know is that you got some money from Berlin.

JUHASZ—[*Proudly, firmly.*] Yes, and thank God it came in time to rescue that poor girl from your dishonorable attentions. She doesn't need your money now. She has mine, mine that was earned by hard, honest labor.

COUNT—Juhasz!

JUHASZ—I'm sorry to be compelled to speak to you like this, excellency. God knows I am grateful to you for all you have done for me, but I am leaving your house, and Paula is coming with me.

COUNT—She is going with you?

JUHASZ—Yes, your excellency.

COUNT—Do you think it wise to give her all your money?

JUHASZ—It was my own money. I do what I want with it.

COUNT—My dear Juhasz, you are riding a very high horse. I mention it only because the fall is apt to be painful. Have you made sure that lady has accepted your generous gift? [PAULA *enters quietly at left.*]

JUHASZ—I don't know what you mean.

COUNT—Perhaps it would be best to ask her.

JUHASZ—Paula, his excellency . . . just said something . . . I didn't understand.

PAULA—I couldn't take it, Mr. Juhasz . . . I couldn't. . . .

JUHASZ—Couldn't take it?

PAULA—I have sent the money to Budapest . . . by telegraph . . . to the attorney for your creditors. [*There is a pause. The* COUNT *exits at back on tiptoe.*] You didn't give me a chance to speak before. . . . I appreciate what you tried to do for me . . . any woman would . . . but I couldn't let you ruin yourself on my account.

JUHASZ—[*Puts the worst construction on her refusal.*] He can give you more. . . . That's true enough! [*She does not answer. There is a pause.*

SANTHA *enters at back. Behind him comes* PHILIP.]

SANTHA—There he is. [SANTHA *exits.*]

PHILIP—Good morning, Mr. Juhasz. Did you get my telegram? [*He bows curtly to* PAULA.]

JUHASZ—I got it, Philip. How are you?

PHILIP—I met his excellency in the garden. He said I would find you here. Am I interrupting?

JUHASZ—No, Philip. I was only saying good-bye to Miss Paula.

PAULA—[*Cordially.*] Are you still angry with me, Philip?

PHILIP—[*Very earnestly; bows coldly.*] Yes, I am. [*To* JUHASZ.] I am glad to hear that you are coming to Budapest. That's what I came for. To ask you to come to town for a day or two.

PAULA—How are things at the shop?

PHILIP—[*Ignoring her.*] That's really what I came for. I hope you don't mind my saying, Mr. Juhasz . . . that business has been wonderful since you went away. The receiver——

JUHASZ—Mr. Geiringer?

PHILIP—Yes. . . . Mr. Geiringer has been collecting all the old outstanding accounts and keeping a sharp eye on the cash. He sent me down here to see you, Mr. Juhasz. It seems he has fallen in love with the shop, and has been wanting to buy it for himself. And when he found out that Mr. Oscar had gone bankrupt in Berlin, he decided——

JUHASZ—What's that? What did Mr. Geiringer find out?

PHILIP—That Oscar had gone into bankruptcy . . . then he went straight to the lawyer for your creditors.

JUHASZ—[*Excitedly.*] Slowly, please. You say that Oscar went bankrupt in Berlin?

PHILIP—Yes. Didn't you know it?

JUHASZ—[*Looking at* PAULA.] No.

PHILIP—I'm sorry to have been the first to tell you . . . but everyone in the city knows it.

JUHASZ—You are quite sure?

PHILIP—Well, his wife has been back in Budapest, living with her mother, for the past two weeks. . . . And I see Oscar every day.

JUHASZ—Are they divorced?

PHILIP—No, but they are so hard up that they have to live at her mother's house.

JUHASZ—If that's so, there has been a terrible mistake somewhere. [*He looks again at* PAULA; *takes out the receipt, crosses to* PHILIP.] Read this.

PAULA—I'll leave you alone. [*She starts for the door.*]

JUHASZ—[*Takes her by the hand.*] No, Paula, you will stay here, please.

PHILIP—[*Reading the notice.*] The Deutsche Bank . . . Oscar Mezei . . . fifty-one thousand

kronen [*in great astonishment.*] I can't understand this at all. . . . He had so little to show when they put him in bankruptcy that he was lucky not to be sent to prison . . . and since then he has been wandering around Budapest in shabby clothes, borrowing a krone from anybody who'd lend him. . . . Why, I lent him two myself the day before yesterday. [*There is a pause.*] Did this money really arrive?

JUHASZ—[*Has not taken his eyes off* PAULA.] Yes.

PHILIP—I can't make that out at all.

PAULA—You had to find out sooner or later, Mr. Juhasz. . . . The money didn't come from Oscar Mezei. . . . It didn't come from Berlin.

JUHASZ—Where *did* it come from?

PAULA—His excellency wanted to help you. . . . He sent you the money . . . and had those bank notices written here.

JUHASZ—Written here?

PAULA—Yes. . . . You see——

JUHASZ—You knew it all the time?

PAULA—I was happy to see you get your shop back, and——

JUHASZ—You knew it was all a pretext to get rid of me? You knew it wasn't my money?

PAULA—Yes, I knew it, Mr. Juhasz.

JUHASZ—And while I was saying those boastful

things to you . . . and making sacrifices for you . . . with another man's money . . . you were inwardly laughing at me all the time.

PAULA—I cried, Mr. Juhasz.

JUHASZ—It wasn't necessary to cry or to laugh or to take all these secret precautions to get rid of me. You need only have told me the truth. [*On the terrace at back a servant girl appears. She is carrying* JUHASZ*'s overcoat and bag. He sees her and turns to* PHILIP.] Come, Philip. [*His voice is low and trembling with sorrow and humiliation.*] Let us go. [*They start up toward the door.*]

PAULA—Mr. Juhasz . . . won't you forgive me . . . and shake hands . . . before you go?

JUHASZ—[*Going; does not look at her.*] Goodbye, Miss Paula.

PAULA—Have you forgotten all you said to me? You are leaving me alone . . . alone with him. [JUHASZ *stops, turns to her slowly. Seeing this, she gathers courage.*] You are leaving me like this because your pride is hurt. You don't care any more . . . what becomes of me.

JUHASZ—[*Opens his mouth, closes it again, wavers, then suddenly roars at* PHILIP, *who has been looking on in blank amazement.*] Why do you stand there like a blockhead? Why don't you take me away from here? Can't you see I am about to stay? [PHILIP *takes his arm and leads him out at back*:

There is a pause. PAULA *watches them go, then she crosses slowly to the* COUNT'S *desk. In the garden, coming from the right, the* COUNT *appears. He stands in the doorway a moment, looking off left, apparently watching* JUHASZ *and* PHILIP *depart.*]

COUNT—Can I believe my eyes? Is that really Juhasz going toward the station? [*She does not reply. He comes in. On the threshold he glances again off left.*] If they hurry they can still catch the 12.05. It just pulled in the station. [*Looks off left once more; comes down.*] Well, sunbeam! [PAULA *looks at him sorrowfully then lowers her eyes.*] We are alone.

PAULA—Alone.

COUNT—It is hard to realize he is really gone. I shall go on expecting him to pop in that door any moment, or appear at the window, or crawl from under the table. . . . It doesn't seem possible that I'm free of him at last . . . that we are free.

PAULA—[*Sadly.*] Free.

COUNT—But it's true, little sunbeam, it's true! No more dictation. No more political speeches. No more interruptions. . . . Now all that remains to be done is have the car overhauled . . . telegraph to Vienna, Salzburg, Paris . . . for the best rooms in the best hotels . . . for the most exquisite frocks . . . for the most magnificent cabin on the swiftest boat to the most beautiful seaport in Spain . . .

[*Comes toward her ardently. The whistle of the departing train is heard.* PAULA *jumps up as if someone had called her, and makes an involuntary movement toward the door at back.*] His train. [*Angrily.*] Is he to hinder me even now? It was just as if he had called back to us. [PAULA *goes toward the door at right.*] Why, Paula! Where are you going?

PAULA—[*Stops at the typewriting machine.*] To my work. . . . Unless your excellency wishes to give me dictation.

COUNT—Dictation? Are you serious?

PAULA—Yes.

COUNT—But why? . . . Did anything happen . . . between you and Juhasz?

PAULA—[*Softly.*] Nothing happened. [*Starts to go.*]

COUNT—[*In polite resignation.*] No . . . no . . . wait . . . I'll dictate, if I must. [*She sits at the machine. He repeats mechanically, distrustfully.*] I'll dictate, if I must. [*Eyes her narrowly.*]

PAULA—We stopped at "The deplorable policies inaugurated by the Minister of Agriculture——"

COUNT—Deplorable policy . . . yes. Well . . . if I must . . . go ahead . . . [*Sighs.*] "The very deplorable policy . . ."

PAULA—[*Writing.*] Policy.

COUNT—"Inaugurated by the Minister . . . leaves the farmer bewildered and quite helpless."

PAULA—[*As she writes, bows her head lower over the machine.*] Helpless.

COUNT—"Now the farmer is devoted to the minister . . ." [*His quick expressive glance meets her eye as she looks up.*] ". . . but the minister does not love the farmer."

PAULA—[*Writing.*] Farmer.

COUNT—"And can the farmer be blamed for feeling abandoned and betrayed?"

PAULA—And betrayed.

COUNT—"But I, for one, know that his excellency, the minister of agriculture . . . belongs to the old school of honor . . . to those who will not abuse——"

PAULA—Abuse.

COUNT—"The faith that was placed in them."

PAULA—The faith . . . [*Stops writing suddenly.*]

COUNT—"The farmer does not ask for sympathy. He wishes no allegiance that is not conscientiously felt. Yet he hopes, yet he believes he still can win the minister to——"

PAULA—[*Sorrowfully.*] He mustn't believe that, your excellency.

COUNT—Go on writing, Paula, that belongs in the speech. . . . And you may add that I too think that it is a forlorn hope, a mistaken belief, which

the farmer must teach himself to renounce. [PAULA *bends over the machine, puts her hand over her eyes.*] What is it, my child? Don't you feel well?

PAULA—[*Rises.*] I beg pardon, your excellency . . . I have had the strangest feeling . . . since . . . since he went away from here. . . . I don't know how to describe it. . . . I don't know what it is. [*Her voice is restrained, embarrassed.*] But I really believe . . . [*bursts out angrily*] I've fallen in love with this Juhasz. [*She hurries out at right. The* COUNT *stares after her a moment thoughtfully, lights a cigarette, and as he flicks the ashes from it,*]

THE CURTAIN FALLS

ACT THREE

ACT THREE

SCENE—*The shop again. It is a sunny autumn morning. When the curtain rises* JUHASZ *is escorting the Insignificant Lady to the door, which* PHILIP *holds open for her.*

UNASSUMING LADY—[*As she goes.*] Thank you. I will telephone you on Wednesday about noon, and if the materials have arrived I will come in during the afternoon some time. Good day.

JUHASZ—Good day, madame.

PHILIP—Good day.

UNASSUMING LADY—[*To* PHILIP]. Good day. [*She exits.* PHILIP closes the door. JUHASZ *returns to the counter down right and begins clearing away.*]

JUHASZ—[*Gloomily.*] This place gets more like a graveyard every day.

PHILIP—I don't see how you can say that, Mr. Juhasz. You've only been back two weeks, and in those two weeks you have done more business than you used to do in two months.

JUHASZ—[*Morosely.*] Not enough to suit me.

PHILIP—It has become the fashion to buy here. Everybody in Budapest seems anxious to help you.

JUHASZ—Because they are sorry for me. I don't want them to be sorry for me.

PHILIP—Nonsense! It's because they like you. You ought to be very happy.

JUHASZ—I'm not happy. Do you understand? And I won't be happy until I have paid him back every heller he laid out for me.

PHILIP—At this rate it won't take long.

JUHASZ—I haven't slept in two weeks, and I shan't sleep while I remain under obligation to him.

PHILIP—I really don't see why you are so angry with the Count. After all, he did it for your good.

JUHASZ—He did it for his own good. And now he laughs at me . . . he and . . . Paula . . . [*The door opens. Oscar stands irresolutely on the threshold. He is shabby and crestfallen.*]

OSCAR—Good morning.

JUHASZ—Good morning.

OSCAR—Good morning, Philip.

PHILIP—How do you do? [*Turns his back on Oscar and, with ostentatious delicacy, exits through the archway. There is a pause.*]

OSCAR—He's angry with me. [*A pause.*] I hope . . . you are not.

JUHASZ—No. [*He continues to clear away.*]

OSCAR—I hope you don't mind my coming here. I have several reasons for coming. First, I consider it my duty. . . .

JUHASZ—Please! You have no more duties where I am concerned.

OSCAR—Oh, but I have!

JUHASZ—Yes, I know. You can't pay me.

OSCAR—Not at present. Unfortunately! . . . In the second place, I owe Philip three kronen . . . [*fumbles in his pocket*] that I want to pay him. . . . In the third place, knowing what a kind heart you have——

JUHASZ—[*Impatiently.*] Say what you have to say, and make it short. I am busy.

OSCAR—[*With an ironic glance around the empty shop.*] One would never think it.

JUHASZ—Well, if it interests you, business is fine. I've done more in the past two weeks than I used to do in two months. Yes!

OSCAR—Really? Really? I am very glad to hear it.

JUHASZ—[*Impatiently.*] Well? Say what you have to say, and get it over with.

OSCAR—Why, er . . . to be brief . . . I want a job.

JUHASZ—Where?

OSCAR—Here.

JUHASZ—With me? You want a job here?

OSCAR—Yes.

JUHASZ—[*Almost speechless with astonishment.*] Well! . . . My dear man . . . [*He comes around to the front of the counter, trying vainly to find words to express his feelings.*]

OSCAR—If you knew how poor we are——

JUHASZ—So . . . so . . . you take me for an utter idiot!

OSCAR—Please don't say that . . . please!

JUHASZ—You must. To ask me that.

OSCAR—I've been everywhere. I've been at Laszlo and Barna's, at Chellis's, at Semlinger and Weiss's, at Stein's, at Brunner's, at Kramer's, at Gold's, at Reedo's, at Kelamen's . . . every shop in town . . . and they all know that I am the most competent man in the business . . . but they all gave me the cold shoulder . . . [*points accusingly at* JUHASZ] . . . on your account!

JUHASZ—On my account? That's very likely!

OSCAR—It's true. They all say they won't have an employe who could abuse the confidence of a man like you. Yes . . . you can stare . . . but it's true. You are keeping me out of a job.

JUHASZ—*I* am?

OSCAR—If you were a plain, ordinary man . . . like everyone else, nobody would care what had happened between us . . .

JUHASZ—Now, really, this is——

OSCAR—I am practically boycotted, that's what I am! Can I help it if you are a saint? Wouldn't I have fallen in love with your wife just the same if you had been a scoundrel? Why should I be held answerable for your virtues?

JUHASZ—No, that's not fair.

OSCAR—I acted honestly and fairly toward you.

JUHASZ—Let us say you did.

OSCAR—And certainly Adele did.

JUHASZ—That's true.

OSCAR—And *now* look at me . . . I had no supper last night, if you want to know it. . . . Neither I nor your wife.

JUHASZ—When you can't buy her supper, then she's *my* wife, eh?

OSCAR—Go on and joke about it. . . . But we went to bed without supper.

JUHASZ—But then . . . she was *your* wife.

OSCAR—Your jokes don't alter the facts. You are responsible for this.

JUHASZ—For what?

OSCAR—For the fact that we are starving. For the fact that I am shabby. And for . . . [*raises his trousers leg*] the fact that my socks are in holes. . . . And for the boycott against me. . . . But if you don't care whether your former wife starves or not—— [JUHASZ *reaches for his purse. Oscar puts out a firm, protesting hand.*] No, my friend, no! [*Heroically.*] We don't accept alms. . . . Believe me, you'd be the last I'd come to for a job if I had only myself to consider. You can imagine what I went through before I brought myself to the point of crossing your threshold. And now if, after all, *you* send me away too——

JUHASZ—[*Touched, but resisting his impulse.*] Will it always be like this? . . . Why can't they let me be? [*Turns, comes down right, passes behind the counter.* PHILIP *enters through the archway.*]

OSCAR—[*Follows* JUHASZ.] Well . . . what do you say?

JUHASZ—[*Through his clenched teeth.*] I can't. . . . You mustn't ask it of me. I'll do anything but that. . . . My dear fellow, you must see I can't do that . . .

OSCAR—[*Bends over the counter toward him.*] Then, at least, will you give me six pair of black socks? [*Raises his trousers leg.*] Mine are in tatters.

JUHASZ—Oh!

OSCAR—You won't even do that for me?

JUHASZ—[*Impatiently.*] Certainly I will . . . [*Takes a box from the shelves, throws it on the counter.*]

OSCAR—You are not going to offer me those HBs.

JUHASZ—What kind do you want then?

OSCAR—You might at least give me KMs.

JUHASZ—I have no more KMs. They are all gone. [*Puts out another box.*] Here are some AWs. [*Opens the box.*] They are very good. [*Shows him a pair.*]

OSCAR—Are you trying to tell *me* these are good? [*Fingers them.*] Cobweb?

JUHASZ—Not at all. [*He feels them too.*]

OSCAR—[*Feels them again.*] Why, if I put these flimsy things on now they'd be in holes before I got home.

JUHASZ—They don't knit socks of steel wire, you know. [*The* THOROUGH YOUNG LADY *enters.*]

THOROUGH YOUNG LADY—Good morning. [PHILIP, JUHASZ *and* OSCAR *return her greeting simultaneously.* OSCAR, *socks in hand, even bows and smiles to her. She addresses* OSCAR.] I'd like a dozen very fine men's handkerchiefs.

OSCAR—[*Sadly, pointing to* PHILIP.] There, please.

THOROUGH YOUNG LADY—Yes. [*She goes to* PHILIP *at the back counter.*]

OSCAR—It's enough to break your heart. [*He looks back at them enviously, dangling the socks from his hand.*]

THOROUGH YOUNG LADY—[*To* PHILIP.] Now I don't want the kind that fade when they are washed.

PHILIP—All our handkerchiefs are absolutely fast colors, madame. [*Puts out a box full.*] Won't you sit down?

THOROUGH YOUNG LADY—Thanks. [*She sits and examines the handkerchiefs.*]

PHILIP—These are batiste, madame, and these are French linen.

THOROUGH YOUNG LADY—Haven't you got these in a bigger size?

PHILIP—Yes, ma'am. [*Puts out another box.*] These are bigger.

THOROUGH YOUNG LADY—Are these the very largest?

PHILIP—[*Indicating others in the same box.*] Those are larger.

THOROUGH YOUNG LADY—Are these the largest you carry?

PHILIP—There is no larger handkerchief made, ma'am. [*He opens an enormous handkerchief.*]

JUHASZ—[*Impatiently.*] Do you want these socks or not?

OSCAR—It's enough to break your heart! Why doesn't he show her the Rumbergers?

JUHASZ—He knows what he's doing. [*Impatiently.*] Please don't take up any more of my time. You can have these if you want them.

OSCAR—These shoddy things!

JUHASZ—I can't be bothered with you any longer.

OSCAR—You can't palm them off on any customer, yet you expect me to take them. Why, they are the worst quality in the shop! [*The* DISSATISFIED LADY *enters.*]

JUHASZ—Good morning. [*Leaving* OSCAR, *he goes to the back counter.*]

DISSATISFIED LADY—[*Joins* JUHASZ.] Good

morning, Mr. Juhasz. I want to look at some nice neckties. To-morrow is my husband's birthday, and I want to get him some for a surprise.

JUHASZ—Will you step this way, please?

DISSATISFIED LADY—He told me exactly the kind he wanted, and said I could go as high as a hundred kronen.

JUHASZ—I see. A real surprise.

DISSATISFIED LADY—Yes.

THOROUGH YOUNG LADY—No, no, no . . . not lilac.

JUHASZ—Instead of buying ready-made ones, why not select your patterns and have them made up?

PHILIP—This is the newest color, Jerusalem blue.

DISSATISFIED LADY—You are sure you could get them out for me in time.

JUHASZ—Oh, yes. That would give you the choice of some very nice silks in restricted patterns.

THOROUGH YOUNG LADY—This straw color is very attractive.

DISSATISFIED LADY—I might look at them.

JUHASZ—We never cut more than one tie of each pattern. Would you step in here? [*He indicates the archway. The* NERVOUS GENTLEMAN *enters.*]

PHILIP—Good day, sir.

NERVOUS GENTLEMAN—Good day.

JUHASZ—[*To the* NERVOUS GENTLEMAN.] Good day. Just a moment, sir.

PHILIP—[*To the* THOROUGH YOUNG LADY.] These are Rumbergers. A very well-known brand.

JUHASZ—[*Flashes* OSCAR *a look of triumph.*] After you, madame. [*Follows the* DISSATISFIED LADY *off through the archway.*]

PHILIP—Will you have a seat, sir? I'll be with you in just a moment.

NERVOUS GENTLEMAN—Thank you. [*He remains standing at the counter, right.*]

PHILIP—Pastel green, pastel brown, pastel blue, pastel yellow.

THOROUGH YOUNG LADY—I don't know what pastel is.

PHILIP—Pastel is four kronen fifty, madame.

THOROUGH YOUNG LADY—You haven't got something about half pastel, have you.

PHILIP—Yes, we have. [*Puts out still another box. To the* NERVOUS GENTLEMAN.] Won't you sit down, sir? Mr. Juhasz will be there in a moment.

NERVOUS GENTLEMAN—That's all right.

PHILIP—These are lighter . . . two kronen apiece lighter. [*The* NERVOUS GENTLEMAN *comes down to the end of the counter where* OSCAR *stands disconsolately before the open box of socks, one pair still held in his hand.*]

THOROUGH YOUNG LADY—And what about these

darker shades? [*The* NERVOUS GENTLEMAN *pokes in the box of socks.*]

PHILIP—They are one krone fifty darker.

THOROUGH YOUNG LADY—I'd like something between the two.

PHILIP—[*Pulls down another box.*] Between the two.

OSCAR—[*Deferentially.*] Those are socks, sir.

NERVOUS GENTLEMAN—I see they are.

OSCAR—[*Very deferentially.*] Would you like to look at some, sir?

NERVOUS GENTLEMAN—Yes.

OSCAR—[*Shows the pair he is holding in his hand.*] Black. Fil d'Ecosse.

THOROUGH YOUNG LADY—I'm afraid they are too expensive. Let me look at the first ones again.

NERVOUS GENTLEMAN—[*Looks at his watch.*] I'm afraid I can't wait.

PHILIP—One moment more, sir. Mr. Juhasz will be right in.

NERVOUS GENTLEMAN—I know what your moments mean. [*Picks up a sock.*]

OSCAR—[*Ingratiatingly.*] Mr. Juhasz will be right in, sir. Now here is an exceptionally fine stocking, sir. [*Shows him the pair he has been holding.*]

NERVOUS GENTLEMAN—[*Compares it with the*

one he is holding.] Just the same as this, isn't it?

OSCAR—Just the same. Genuine Fil d'Ecosse.

NERVOUS GENTLEMAN—Is it really good?

OSCAR—Absolutely. [*He is at the end of the counter now.*]

NERVOUS GENTLEMAN—It looks good.

OSCAR—You wouldn't want a better sock, sir.

PHILIP—[*Who has been watching them; angrily.*] Coming right away, sir. One second more!

NERVOUS GENTLEMAN—[*Looks at him, then at* OSCAR.] You . . . work here?

OSCAR—Well . . . not exactly, sir . . . I . . . I . . . I'm a relation of Mr. Juhasz's.

NERVOUS GENTLEMAN—Because I can't wait any longer.

OSCAR—[*Goes swiftly behind the counter.*] Then just let me wait on you, sir . . . until Mr. Juhasz comes. This is a fine quality, sir, absolutely first class.

NERVOUS GENTLEMAN—Will these tear easily?

OSCAR—[*Laughs.*] These? These are the strongest Fil d'Ecosse made. [*Pulls at the hose.*] They're like steel.

NERVOUS GENTLEMAN—They look good.

OSCAR—And they will feel good on the foot.

NERVOUS GENTLEMAN—I want a good quality.

OSCAR—[*Spluttering in his eagerness.*] We sell nothing but first-class goods, sir. You won't find

a more durable Fil d'Ecosse anywhere. My . . . my brother-in-law imports it direct from England.

NERVOUS GENTLEMAN—I'll take some. Then I want some with colored clocks.

OSCAR—How many of these, sir?

NERVOUS GENTLEMAN—Well, if they are really so good, give me a dozen pair.

OSCAR—Yes, sir. Twelve. [*Counts them briskly.*]

THOROUGH YOUNG LADY—Do you mind letting me look at those first ones again? [*The* DISSATISFIED LADY *and* JUHASZ *re-enter.*]

DISSATISFIED LADY—[*Speaking as she enters.*] . . . and my husband is very fond of bow ties, those gay ones they are wearing now. [*Comes down left.*]

JUHASZ—[*Without noticing* OSCAR, *he comes down to the table at left.*] The bow ties are here, madame. Considered very smart just now. Restricted pattern, too. We only make up two or three of each. A man doesn't like to see the tie he is wearing . . . [*Now he sees* OSCAR, *who has just climbed up on a stool to reach some boxes on the top shelves. They look into each other's eyes across the shop.* JUHASZ's *mouth remains open, the word sticks in his throat, his hand, holding a necktie, remains poised in the air.*]

OSCAR—[*Quickly.*] The gentleman couldn't wait. He was about to walk out. I didn't want to see a customer walk out of the shop, so I just showed

him one or two things in a hurry. . . . I'd like to know about what size. Will you show me your hand, please? [*The* NERVOUS GENTLEMAN *extends his hand.* OSCAR, *looks at* JUHASZ *again, greatly flustered, takes the* NERVOUS GENTLEMAN'S *hand, shakes it cordially.*] How do you do? [*He stares at* JUHASZ *anxiously.*]

NERVOUS GENTLEMAN—What do you say?

OSCAR—Oh, pardon me! . . . Will you close your hand, sir? [*The* NERVOUS GENTLEMAN *extends his fist.* OSCAR *measures a sock over it.*] These are just right.

THOROUGH YOUNG LADY—[*To* PHILIP.] Let me see? Will they wear?

JUHASZ—[*To the* DISSATISFIED LADY.] A man doesn't like to see the same tie he is wearing on somebody else. [*He is still staring at* OSCAR.]

OSCAR—[*Rapidly.*] Three pair. . . . Yes, sir. And a dozen of these . . . and now—— [*Scans the shelves.*] Long black Fil d'Ecosse with clocks. [*Takes down a box and throws it on the counter.*] These are really excellent. [*Opens the box in feverish haste, shows the socks.*] We are the only ones in the city who carry them. . . . You can do almost anything to this stocking without harming it . . . boil it, bake it, soak it in lye, in alcohol, in vitriol. . . . May I see your hand again?

DISSATISFIED LADY—[*Who has been rummaging*

in the box, now has several neckties in her hand.] These aren't bad.

NERVOUS GENTLEMAN—[*Extends his fist.*] It's socks I want, you know, not gloves.

OSCAR—Ha, ha, ha! That's good! [*Measures.*] These are exactly right.

NERVOUS GENTLEMAN—Sure they won't be too small?

OSCAR—Perhaps just a half size larger. [*Turns to the shelves again.*]

PHILIP—The color won't run if they are washed in lukewarm water.

THOROUGH YOUNG LADY—Are you quite sure? [*The* NERVOUS GENTLEMAN *takes the socks from* OSCAR *and inspects them.*]

DISSATISFIED LADY—These aren't exactly what I wanted either, but I'll take them. How much does it all come to?

JUHASZ—[*Still watching* OSCAR. *His voice trembles.*] Seven kronen. . . . And these are five-fifty . . . these long ones . . . nine kronen eleven.

THOROUGH YOUNG LADY—What did you say these were?

DISSATISFIED LADY—I'm sure my husband won't like them.

THOROUGH YOUNG LADY—[*Rises.*] Yes, perhaps I had better look at them too.

NERVOUS GENTLEMAN—And now I want a couple of pair with some sort of design, not clocks.

OSCAR—Stars, circles, dots, triangles, squares, circles, stars, squares, dots——

NERVOUS GENTLEMAN—Some very quiet design.

OSCAR—[*Contemplates the shelves.*] Quiet, quiet . . . Just a moment, sir. I'll bring it right here. [*He hurries off through the archway.*]

DISSATISFIED LADY—These are rather good. But I only see one.

JUHASZ—There must be more. [*He rummages in the box.*]

THOROUGH YOUNG LADY—Now, if you don't mind, we will go over the lot from the beginning. Seeing so many kinds gets one all confused.

PHILIP—Just as you say, madame.

OSCAR—[*Re-enters with a box.*] How do you like these, sir? [*Puts it on the counter.*]

NERVOUS GENTLEMAN—Too loud. Much too loud. I want something very quiet.

OSCAR—[*Greatly perturbed.*] If I only knew where they were. [*In perplexity.*] Quiet, quiet, quiet . . . [*Looks at* PHILIP.] If I only knew where those . . . [*As* PHILIP *ignores him, he raises his voice.*] They used to be kept here on the third shelf.

JUHASZ—[*Grudgingly, angrily.*] Fourth shelf

. . . on the end. [PHILIP *angrily bangs a box down on the counter.*]

OSCAR—My God! [*Startled, puts his hand over his heart.*] Thank you, thank you, sir! . . . On the end . . . [*Transported with joy.*] Very kind of you, sir! [*He is almost weeping.*] Fourth shelf . . . on the end. Thank you, sir!

DISSATISFIED LADY—[*Who has by this time accumulated a handful of neckties.*] That will be all. . . . Just these ten.

JUHASZ—[*Going to the cashier's desk.*] We will send them this afternoon, madame.

DISSATISFIED LADY—How much do I owe?

JUHASZ—Five times seven . . . and five times five fifty. . . . Sixty-two fifty.

DISSATISFIED LADY—[*Gives him a hundred krone note.*] If you please.

JUHASZ—[*Has gone behind the cashier's desk.*] Sixty-two fifty. [*Rings the cash register, makes change.*] And fifty are sixty-three, ninety, one hundred. Thank you.

DISSATISFIED LADY—This afternoon without fail.

OSCAR—[*Raises his head.*] 16 Nador Street, Fourth Floor, Apartment 1.

DISSATISFIED LADY—That's right. Good day. [*She exits.* JUHASZ *escorts her to the door, closes it after her, turns, glares at* OSCAR *and comes toward him slowly.*]

OSCAR—[*Watches him come, fearfully, as if he expected to have his ears boxed.*] One with blue stars, these with the white squares, and would you like these violet dots, and these with the very dainty circles, and these . . .

NERVOUS GENTLEMAN—Hold on. I only want three. Let me see. [*He examines the socks.* JUHASZ *passes them slowly, and goes to the* THOROUGH YOUNG LADY *whom* PHILIP *is showing a bath-robe.*]

THOROUGH YOUNG LADY—It looks like a night-gown.

NERVOUS GENTLEMAN—Put these three aside.

JUHASZ—[*Who is standing now between the two counters.*] Show the lady those hooded robes.

NERVOUS GENTLEMAN—[*Rises.*] And now quickly, for I am late, a white cap, please.

OSCAR—[*Looks at* JUHASZ.] A white cap

JUHASZ—[*Looks at* OSCAR *sternly.*] *I'll* get it for the gentleman. [*He exits through the arch-way.*]

OSCAR—[*Crestfallen.*] The chief will bring it right in, sir. [*There is a pause.* OSCAR *rubs his hands.*] We have some very nice neckwear.

NERVOUS GENTLEMAN—I don't need any, thanks.

OSCAR—Tennis shoes?

NERVOUS GENTLEMAN—Thank you, no.

OSCAR—Sport shirts?

NERVOUS GENTLEMAN—[*Nervously.*] Don't need

any. I need a white cap. Nothing else. [*A brief pause.*]

OSCAR—Belts?

NERVOUS GENTLEMAN—No.

OSCAR—[*With a furtive glance at* PHILIP.] Bathrobes? [*The* NERVOUS GENTLEMAN *shakes his head.*] White gaiters?

NERVOUS GENTLEMAN—[*Sharply.*] Thank you, no! [*Rises.*] I asked for a white cap. [*A brief pause.*]

OSCAR—Nice walking stick?

NERVOUS GENTLEMAN—[*Crossly.*] No . . . A cap is what I asked for.

OSCAR—[*Offended.*] It will be here right away. [*Crosses to the table down left, takes a stick from the rack which stands there, flourishes it.*] This is a very unusual stick, sir.

NERVOUS GENTLEMAN—I said I didn't want one.

OSCAR—Yes, sir. [*He flourishes the stick, demonstrating its lightness. The* NERVOUS GENTLEMAN *sullenly watches him balancing it, bending it, testing its suppleness.*]

NERVOUS GENTLEMAN—Let me see.

OSCAR—[*Gives it to him.*] Light as a feather.

NERVOUS GENTLEMAN—[*Balances and bends it.*] I don't need it. [*Returns it to* OSCAR.] I have more sticks now than I can use.

OSCAR—Just as you say, sir. [JUHASZ *re-enters with the cap.*]

JUHASZ—Here you are, sir. White flannel.

NERVOUS GENTLEMAN—That's right. [*Puts it with his other purchases.*] A dozen black socks, a dozen with clocks, these three figured ones, and the cap.

JUHASZ—Shall we send them?

NERVOUS GENTLEMAN—4 Sas Street . . . Lissauer. . . . With the bill.

JUHASZ—[*Makes a note of it.*] Yes, sir.

NERVOUS GENTLEMAN—[*Pulls the stick out of* OSCAR'S *hand.*] What does this stick cost?

OSCAR—Twenty-four kronen.

NERVOUS GENTLEMAN—Oh, put it on the bill too. Good day. [*He exits with the stick.*]

THOROUGH YOUNG LADY—No monogram. Just two letters.

PHILIP—[*Writing.*] What letters?

THOROUGH YOUNG LADY—R. S.

PHILIP—R. S.

THOROUGH YOUNG LADY—In white, please.

PHILIP—White letters.

OSCAR—[*Rushes off through the archway, calling to the bookkeeper.*] Charge Lissauer with twenty-four kronen more for a cane.

} [*Simultaneously.*]

[JUHASZ *begins to replace the boxes on the shelves down right.* PAULA *enters from the street. She is very beautifully dressed.*]

PAULA—Good morning. [*She comes slowly down to* JUHASZ. PHILIP *looks up, stares at her in blank amazement.*]

JUHASZ—[*Pauses in the act of lifting a big box.*] Good morning. [*There is a pause.*]

THOROUGH YOUNG LADY—And now let us go over them once more to see if they are all here. How many should there be?

PHILIP—[*Confused.*] Just as you say.

THOROUGH YOUNG LADY—*How* many?

PHILIP—Oh! How many? Forty-eight.

THOROUGH YOUNG LADY—Let us count them over. [*They count.*]

PAULA—[*Extends her hand to* JUHASZ.] How are you, Mr. Juhasz?

JUHASZ—[*Puts down the box.*] Thank you . . . very well. [*Extends his hand to her over the counter.*] Won't you sit down?

PAULA—[*After a pause.*] I can hardly believe it is only two weeks since I saw you.

JUHASZ—That's not a very long time.

PAULA—No. [*She looks at him.*] I've come . . . I've come to buy a few things.

JUHASZ—How odd!

PAULA—Odd?

JUHASZ—For you to come here . . . as a customer.

PAULA—Yes, as a customer. [*A pause.*]

JUHASZ—I shall be happy to give you satisfaction . . . as a customer. Perhaps . . . I ought to make things a bit cheaper for you.

PAULA—I don't want things cheaper, thank you. . . . Why do you look at me like that?

JUHASZ—You came in so . . . unexpectedly. . . . Have you got leave of absence?

PAULA—Oh, I'm not at Gerelypuszta any more. I'm back in town again. So is the Count. That is, he's at Monte Carlo just now.

JUHASZ—Monte Carlo. Great railway junction. Gambling casinos.

PAULA—No. He has gone there to shoot pigeons.

JUHASZ—He never used to like that kind of sport.

PAULA—He is passionately fond of it now. . . . Ever since you went away. When he hears that there is to be a slaughter of pigeons somewhere he rushes to the spot. . . . I was supposed to have gone to Monte Carlo with him, but I didn't.

JUHASZ—You didn't go.

PAULA—No. I had too many things to attend to at home first. [*Takes off her gloves, produces a list.*] There are so many things I want, and they are so hard to get here.

JUHASZ—Hard . . . here. . . . Yes. . . . Very

hard. [*There is a pause.*] And what is it you wish, Miss Paula?

PAULA—[*Sits, consults her list.*] You used to have some very fine French pajamas for ladies. How well I remember them! They are a hundred kronen the pair, aren't they?

JUHASZ—Yes.

PAULA—How many have you left?

JUHASZ—I still have them all. Eight pair.

PAULA—I'll take them all.

JUHASZ—[*Astounded.*] You?

PAULA—Yes, please. And to save time won't you get your pencil and take down my whole order? I want it sent . . . with the bill, as soon as possible, please. I shall be in town only a few days more. The address is 128 Andrassy Street.

JUHASZ—[*Writes.*] What apartment?

PAULA—The whole second floor.

JUHASZ—[*Writes, greatly bewildered.*] Eight pajamas. Whole second floor.

PAULA—[*Reads from her list.*] Twenty-four white neckties.

JUHASZ—For yourself?

PAULA—No, for my butler. I like him to wear a fresh tie every day.

JUHASZ—[*Writes; his voice trembles.*] Twenty-four white ties for butler.

PAULA—Twenty-four pair of white lisle gloves.

JUHASZ—[*Writes.*] For the butler?

PAULA—No, for my page boy.

JUHASZ—[*Writes.*] Page boy.

PAULA—And some gloves for myself. Those motoring gloves . . . with the ends like a funnel. . . . You know what I mean.

JUHASZ—Gauntlets.

PAULA—Gauntlets, yes.

JUHASZ—[*Writes disconsolately.*] Gauntlets.

PAULA—[*Sighs.*] Gauntlets.

JUHASZ—But . . . they are only worn for driving.

PAULA—I drive my own car.

JUHASZ—[*Sits down.*] A big car?

PAULA—It's standing out front. . . . Fifty horsepower.

JUHASZ—Fifty? [*Writes.*] Gauntlets. . . . How many pair? . . . Fifty?

PAULA—Six will be plenty until I get to Paris. I can buy more there if I need them. You can get everything in Paris.

JUHASZ—Yes. . . . You can get everything in Paris. . . . A wonderful city.

PAULA—But so far to motor to. . . . I'm afraid the journey will be tiresome.

JUHASZ—You won't be bored. . . . You probably aren't going alone. . . .

PAULA—Certainly not.

JUHASZ—Your mother?

PAULA—No. Mother is in Vienna, but from there she is going on to Wiesbaden to wait for us. We will pick her up on our way home.

JUHASZ—[*Earnestly, aroused.*] Is there anything the matter with your mother?

PAULA—Her health, you mean? No. She's only going to Wiesbaden to play cards. [*There is a pause. She reads from her list.*] Could you have a footman's cap made up for me quickly?

JUHASZ—Footman?

PAULA—I've been so annoyed about his cap. The one he brought with him was all covered with gold braid. He looked just like a hotel doorman. What I wish you'd get for me is something discreet and in good taste, something suitable for a private dwelling.

JUHASZ—A private dwelling. . . .

PAULA—Yes. For a lady living alone.

JUHASZ—[*Tremblingly writes.*] Footman . . . cap . . . private dwelling. . . . I'll look around at the cap-maker's.

PAULA—I shall be awfully obliged. [*She rises. There is a pause.*]

JUHASZ—[*Rises.*] Not at all. It's I who am obliged.

PAULA—[*Meets his eyes steadily.*] Why do you look at me so strangely?

JUHASZ—[*Looks down at his list.*] I'm pleased to see how clever you have been. . . . Butler, motor car, private dwelling, white gloves. I didn't know. . . .

PAULA—You didn't know?

JUHASZ—No.

PAULA—But . . . the whole city knows——

JUHASZ—Let us not talk about that, Paula. The important thing is that you are happy. Is his excellency well?

PAULA—[*Nervously.*] He is a perfect gentleman. One must say that for him.

JUHASZ—Certainly.

PAULA—After he had gone to the trouble and expense of buying and furnishing a whole house for me. . . . You probably know the place . . . that little mansion in Biedermeyer style that belonged to the late Count Schattenheim. . . .

JUHASZ—Yes. . .

PAULA—He bought it for me and furnished it beautifully and then he had the tact to go off to Monte Carlo. And when he got there he sent me a thousand-word telegram.

JUHASZ—A thousand. That's a lot of words.

PAULA—A telegram to the effect that he had gone off because he didn't wish to influence my decision in any way. . . . I must be free to shape my own destiny, he said. . . . The mansion was mine . . .

on the day that . . . of my own free will . . . I entered it. On the desk in my boudoir . . . he said . . . I would find a telegram already written and addressed. It consists of a single word, "Come." . . . Twenty-eight hours after I send that telegram he will knock on my door. . . . So far . . . that is all that's happened. . . . Tactful of him, wasn't it?

JUHASZ—Very.

PAULA—That was ten days ago.

JUHASZ—Yes?

PAULA—[*More and more nervously.*] I haven't sent the telegram yet. [*There is a pause.*]

JUHASZ—[*More and more calmly.*] I can imagine how eagerly he must be awaiting it.

PAULA—He said he would wait fourteen days. I have four days left. . . .

JUHASZ—From what you ordered here, I observe——

PAULA—[*Sharply.*] I haven't sent the telegram yet. [*A pause.*]

JUHASZ—One needs time for everything.

PAULA—I have four days left. [*Nervously.*] And as the last day draws nearer . . . I have been wondering . . . because you have always been so good to me . . . what *you* would think about it.

JUHASZ—I should consider it very clever of you.

PAULA—Are you advising me to do it?

JUHASZ—I am reconciling myself to the idea.

PAULA—You . . . you would despise me, Mr. Juhasz, wouldn't you?

JUHASZ—How can you suppose such a thing?

PAULA—You see how . . .

JUHASZ—I see how clever you are. And how happy you will be.

PAULA—[*Sharply.*] I'll send it off . . . this afternoon.

JUHASZ—Then the Count ought to receive it tonight.

PAULA—Yes.

JUHASZ—I can imagine . . . how happy he will be.

PAULA—Yes. He loves me . . . very much.

JUHASZ—I know. [*There is a pause. The* PATIENT LADY *enters.*]

PATIENT LADY—Good morning.

PHILIP—Good morning, madame. I'll be with you in a moment.

PAULA—[*Sulkily.*] I don't want to detain you. Good-bye, Mr. Juhasz. [*She extends her hand. He takes it.*]

JUHASZ—Good-bye. [OSCAR *enters through the archway. The* PATIENT LADY *goes to him.*]

PAULA—There is something I forgot.

JUHASZ—Yes?

PAULA—You used to have a certain French perfume.

JUHASZ—Yes.

PAULA—It seems to me it was called "Exquisite heur." A very strong, sensuous perfume. A perfume for bad women.

JUHASZ—Oh!

PAULA—At least you said only bad women would use it, and even they . . . only for . . . the most intimate occasions.

JUHASZ—[*Wincing.*] Yes, I have some left.

PAULA—I'll have a bottle, please. . . . Two bottles. . . .

JUHASZ—You are a bit cruel, Paula. You might at least have bought *that* somewhere else.

PAULA—I'd rather buy it here.

JUHASZ—As you like. [*To* OSCAR.] The lady wants some perfume. [OSCAR *takes his place.*] That penetrating stuff. . . . Exquisite heur. [*Sharply.*] That perfume for harlots! [*To the* PATIENT LADY.] What can I show you, madame?

OSCAR—Yes, sir.

PATIENT LADY—I'd like to look at some scarfs, Mr. Juhasz. And a nice sweater.

JUHASZ—Shall we look at the sweaters first? [*Indicates the archway.*] Will you step in here, please? [*She exits through the archway. He follows her.* PAULA *stares thoughtfully after them.*]

OSCAR—[*Shrilly.*] Exquisite heur?

PAULA—[*Starts.*] For mercy's sake . . . you?

OSCAR—It's me.

PAULA—Mr. Oscar! You here again?

OSCAR—I'm here, but I'm not *Mr.* Oscar any more. [*He goes quickly to the table down left, selects a bottle of perfume, gives it to her.*] Exquisite heur. [*Crosses right, behind the counter.*]

PAULA—[*Shakes her head.*] What are you doing here?

OSCAR—[*Cheerfully.*] My affairs didn't go so well.

PAULA—Where is Mrs.——

OSCAR—She's *my* wife now.

PAULA—And Mr. Juhasz took you back? You must have begged him on your knees.

OSCAR—That wouldn't have done any good. You have to know how to handle him. There were a lot of customers here, and I started right in waiting on one. Pure psychology! I know Mr. Juhasz backwards. . . . He hasn't got the heart to throw anybody out. . . . Is there anything else I can get you?

PAULA—No, thank you. [*The* OLD GENTLEMAN *enters.*]

OLD GENTLEMAN—Good morning.

OSCAR—Good morning, professor. [*To* PAULA.] See you again. [*To the* OLD GENTLEMAN.] What can I do for you, sir?

OLD GENTLEMAN—I want a pair of inexpensive gloves.

OSCAR—Inexpensive. Yes, sir. What kind? Won't you sit down?

OLD GENTLEMAN—Swedish. Size nine and a half. Dark gray. [*Sits at about the middle of the right counter.*]

OSCAR—[*Lays out a box.*] Dark gray. Swedish. Nine and a half. [*To* PAULA, *who is crossing slowly to the table down left.*] See you again some time. [*To the* OLD GENTLEMAN.] How do you like these? [*Opens and expands a pair.*]

OLD GENTLEMAN—Are they Swedish?

OSCAR—Why, old Heinrich Ibsen himself wasn't as Swedish as these gloves are.

OLD GENTLEMAN—Ibsen was a Norwegian.

OSCAR—I said he wasn't as Swedish! Ha, ha! [*Passes over the gloves.* JUHASZ *and the* PATIENT LADY *enter through the archway.*]

PATIENT LADY—[*As she enters.*] Now about the scarfs.

JUHASZ—[*Comes down to the table.*] They are here, madame. [*Shows her one.*] They are quite new.

PATIENT LADY—I saw some like these at Braun's some time ago.

OSCAR—Not like those you didn't, madame, not

like those! [*He is forcing a glove on the* Old Gentleman's *hand.*] Now push, push hard!

Juhasz—[*Has passed to the end of the counter down right.*] Here are some in plain colors. [*Puts out a box.*] They are in much better taste. Sit down, please. [*The* Patient Lady *sits at the counter.* Juhasz *is behind it.* Paula, *at the table down left, is looking at him sulkily.*]

Oscar—Push, professor, push! [*Helps him.*]

Old Gentleman—If I do it will burst.

Oscar—Don't you care.

Old Gentleman—Better stretch it a bit more.

Oscar—Let it burst, professor. A glove oughtn't to be stretched too much. It will go on your hand all right.

Juhasz—This dark green isn't bad. Or do you prefer this gray and black?

[*Simultaneously.*]

[Paula *takes off her gloves. Then her hat. Throws them determinedly on the table. All look at her.*]

Oscar—[*Loudly, quickly, to bridge the uncomfortable silence which ensues.*] Perhaps we *had* better take a half size larger, professor. Just one moment. . . .

PHILIP—[*Joins in loudly.*] This isn't expensive at all, if you consider the quality. . . .

OSCAR— . . . to try this size. It doesn't matter if they fit a bit easy. Better that way than too snug.

PHILIP—You can't get quality without paying for it. We have a customer, an old gentleman, who always says "The cheapest is dearest in the long run." And he's quite right. I believe that if you. . . .

OSCAR—Or we will stick to the eight and a half if you like. They aren't so very tight. Some people prefer them that way. It's all a matter of taste.

JUHASZ—[*Joins in shrilly.*] This is pure lamb's wool and that makes it warmer than another scarf twice its weight. . . . And it's fashionable too. . . . We carry all the plain colors, but the striped ones come only in two shades, gray against a black ground or . . .

[*Loudly and simultaneously.*]

[*Meantime* PAULA *has gone to the cashier's desk, glanced back at* JUHASZ *once more, and now, with a petulant stamp of her foot, she goes behind the desk. A sudden silence falls. She rolls up her sleeves and sits in the cashier's place. Her face is resolutely set.* OSCAR, PHILIP *and* JUHASZ *watch her, aghast.*]

PHILIP—It is always a good plan to buy the best, for it gives the most satisfaction and lasts the longest. . . .

OSCAR—They may be uncomfortable for a day or two, but then they begin to conform with the shape of your hand, and you are glad you . . .

JUHASZ—You will find these very practical for cold weather. And they are ideal for skating in winter. Both men and women wear them. . . .

[*Simultaneously, softly, stammering; all begin at the same time.*]

[*He is greatly distressed; his voice trembles.*] We often sell several of these to the same customer . . . three or four at a time . . . even more . . . I recommend them highly, madame. [*There is a pause.* PAULA *sits obstinately behind the cashier's desk.*]

OSCAR—Just push a little harder, please. [*He helps the* OLD GENTLEMAN.] Push, push!

PATIENT LADY—I'll take these three. What do they cost?

JUHASZ—[*His voice trembles.*] Forty kronen each, madame.

PATIENT LADY—[*Rises.*] Send them, please. [*Fumbles in her purse.*] Three times forty. . . . One hundred and twenty.

JUHASZ—Yes. One hundred and twenty.

PATIENT LADY—After all, I think two will be plenty. . . . Let me see which two. [*They compare the scarfs.*]

THOROUGH YOUNG LADY—[*Rises.*] What does it all come to? [*She has money in her hand.*]

PHILIP—Three hundred and ten kronen, madame.

THOROUGH YOUNG LADY—[*Turns toward the cashier's desk.*] Three hundred and ten. [*She is about to go to* PAULA.]

PHILIP—[*Loudly, harshly.*] No, no! [*She turns to him in surprise.*] You can pay me, please.

THOROUGH YOUNG LADY—Not the cashier?

PHILIP—[*With conviction.*] No. [*She pays him.*]

PHILIP—Thank you, madame. Three hundred and ten. I'll get them out for you Thursday without fail.

THOROUGH YOUNG LADY—I think that's everything. If I find I have forgotten anything I'll come in again to-morrow morning. Good day.

PHILIP—[*Sees her to the door.*] Good day, madame.

PAULA—[*Echoes his salutation, very loudly.*] Good day! [PHILIP *gives her a disdainful glance and returns to the back counter where he begins to clear away.*]

PATIENT LADY—One is prettier than the other. . . . Oh, well, send the three of them. Three times forty . . . [*takes out money*] makes one hundred and twenty.

JUHASZ—[*Uneasily.*] One hundred and twenty.

PATIENT LADY—[*With a glance at* PAULA.] Do I pay the cashier?

JUHASZ—[*Very uncomfortable.*] Perhaps . . . it's all the same . . . you had better pay me.

PATIENT LADY—[*Puts the money down.*] One hundred and twenty.

JUHASZ—One hundred and twenty. Thank you, madame. [*Puts the money in his pocket.*] They will be delivered this afternoon.

PATIENT LADY—Thank you. Good day. [*Goes to the door.*]

JUHASZ—Good day, madame.

PHILIP—[*Holds the door open for her.*] Good day.

PAULA—[*Emphatically, with a bow.*] Good day! [*The* PATIENT LADY *exits.*]

PHILIP—[*To* PAULA, *with an inflection of con-*

temptuous amazement.] Good day? [*The* ARISTOCRATIC LADY *enters.*]

PAULA—Good day.

PHILIP—[*Very cordially.*] Good day.

ARISTOCRATIC LADY—[*To* PHILIP.] What about my raincoat?

PHILIP—We are expecting it from Vienna any day, madame.

OLD GENTLEMAN—[*Takes the package which* OSCAR *has made up for him.*] What do I owe?

OSCAR—Twenty-four kronen.

OLD GENTLEMAN—I suppose you can change a thousand.

OSCAR—[*Hesitates, leans over the counter, looks from* PAULA *to* JUHASZ, *then calls.*] I . . . eh . . . a thousand? . . . Oh, Mr. Juhasz! The gentleman wants to know if we can change a thousand. [*There is a painful silence.*]

PAULA—[*Rises, addresses the* OLD GENTLEMAN *sweetly.*] Certainly, sir.

OSCAR—Just a moment, sir. [*The* OLD GENTLEMAN, *on the point of going to* PAULA, *pauses, in surprise.*]

JUHASZ—[*In great perplexity.*] How much does the gentleman pay?

OSCAR—[*Leaning far out over the counter, looks from* JUHASZ *to* PAULA *then back again.*] Twenty-four.

JUHASZ—[*After a short inward struggle.*] Cash! Twenty-four out of a thousand! [*The* OLD GENTLEMAN *goes to* PAULA, *pays her.*]

PAULA—[*Ecstatically.*] Twenty-four out of a thousand. [*Rings the register loudly, opens the drawer.*] Twenty-four and six make thirty . . . fifty . . . one hundred . . . two . . . five . . . and five are one thousand. Thank you, sir.

OLD GENTLEMAN—Good day.

PAULA—Come and see us again.

OLD GENTLEMAN—[*Has gone to the door, counting his change, now turns.*] Look here! You gave me a hundred too much. [*Returns a banknote to her.*]

PAULA—[*In confusion.*] Oh, I beg your pardon.

OLD GENTLEMAN—That's all right. I never mind getting too much. [*He exits, chuckling over his joke.*]

OSCAR—[*Has replaced the boxes on the shelves.*] No matter. Such things happen. [*He goes out through the archway.*]

PHILIP—[*To the* ARISTOCRATIC LADY.] Shall we look at the Burberrys?

JUHASZ—[*To the* ARISTOCRATIC LADY.] That coat from Vienna should arrive to-night at the latest.

ARISTOCRATIC LADY—Am I mistaken? That man who just went in there. . . . Wasn't that . . . Oscar?

JUHASZ—Yes.

ARISTOCRATIC LADY—Is he back here again?

JUHASZ—He's . . . helping out.

ARISTOCRATIC LADY—[*Stares at* PAULA.] Helping out? . . . and . . . this is the young lady who used to be here, isn't it?

PAULA—[*Ironically sweet.*] Yes, madame, the same young lady.

ARISTOCRATIC LADY—Come, Mr. Philip, let us look at the Burberrys, and you can tell me all about it. [*Sees that* JUHASZ *is about to follow her.*] Don't you bother, Mr. Juhasz. We'll manage without you. [*She and* PHILIP *exit through the archway.* JUHASZ *stands rigid, mute. A cabman enters from the street, whip in hand.*]

CABMAN—Beg pardon, lady. . . . Have you forgot me? You said I wouldn't have to wait long.

JUHASZ—[*Thrusts his hand in his pocket.*] How much do you get?

CABMAN—Three kronen.

JUHASZ—Here are six for you.

PAULA—Nothing of the kind. [*Opens the drawer of the register.*] Three kronen fifty are plenty. [*Gives the money to the* CABMAN.] There you are. [*The* CABMAN *looks at the money, then at* JUHASZ *and at* PAULA.] What are you waiting for?

CABMAN—[*Disappointed, surly.*] All right, all

right. I'm going. [*Gives her a withering glance and exits. There is a brief pause.*]

JUHASZ—What about the motor?

PAULA—That was it.

JUHASZ—Fifty horse-power.

PAULA—Only one horse-power.

JUHASZ—[*Goes to the cashier's desk.*] Then . . . the motor is in the garage?

PAULA—In the moon.

JUHASZ—That's far off.

PAULA—Far off.

JUHASZ—Shall I telephone now about the footman's cap?

PAULA—Don't bother. The footman has his cap.

JUHASZ—Has he?

PAULA—But he hasn't got a job.

JUHASZ—How's that?

PAULA—Because there is no mansion for him to work in. While I sat over there . . . [*points to the counter*] there might have been.

JUHASZ—Gauntlets?

PAULA—Shan't need any.

JUHASZ—Twenty-four pair of white gloves.

PAULA—That's twenty-three too many. I do need one pair.

JUHASZ—One pair?

PAULA—For myself.

JUHASZ—Eight pair ladies' silk pajamas.

PAULA—[*Low, shyly.*] If you think I——

JUHASZ—You need them. [*Ardently.*] Of course you need them. . . . Perfume. . . . Exquisite heur.

PAULA—No, indeed!

JUHASZ—Yes. Three bottles.

PAULA—I hate the stuff.

JUHASZ—I adore it. It's the most beautiful scent on earth. Four bottles!

PAULA—If you like it so much . . . you may order a barrel. [*There is a brief pause.*]

JUHASZ—[*Jealously.*] And . . . what about the telegram?

PAULA—[*Rises slowly.*] I wonder how it is . . . that some people can have such tender hearts and such very thick heads! [*He hesitates a moment, then he takes her head in his hands and kisses her.* PHILIP *and the* ARISTOCRATIC LADY *re-enter.*]

PHILIP—Cash! Two hundred and forty. [*Shouts.*] Cash! Two hundred and forty. [JUHASZ *and* PAULA *separate hastily.* JUHASZ *slinks bashfully down right.*]

ARISTOCRATIC LADY—[*She is carrying a package.*] How interesting! [*Goes to the cashier's desk.*] My husband is going to Wiesbaden. I hear your mother will be there too.

PAULA—My mother is at home, madame, and intends to stay there.

ARISTOCRATIC LADY — [*To* PHILIP.] But you told me——

PAULA—Idle gossip, madame. [*Points to the package.*] Are you paying for that now?

ARISTOCRATIC LADY—No. Charge it, please. As usual.

PAULA — [*Very curt and businesslike.*] Yes, madame. But we must ask you not to charge any more things here until your old account is settled. [*The* ARISTOCRATIC LADY *gasps.*] And about that old account. We must have a check by the first of the month or we shall be compelled to place it in our attorney's hands.

ARISTOCRATIC LADY — What's that you say? [JUHASZ *makes a gesture of protest.*]

PAULA—In our attorney's hands. From to-day on we are inaugurating a new policy of extending credits for a limited period only.

ARISTOCRATIC LADY—[*Furious.*] Mr. Juhasz, what do you say to this?

PAULA — [*Before* JUHASZ *can answer.*] Mr. Juhasz has nothing to say to it. He has given me entire charge of the credit department. [JUHASZ *hangs his head.*]

ARISTOCRATIC LADY—[*Indignantly.*] Good day.

PAULA—Good day. [*The* ARISTOCRATIC LADY *sweeps indignantly out.*]

PHILIP and JUHASZ—[*Simultaneously.*] Good day.

PAULA—That settles her. And there are a few more like her I mean to attend to. [*There is a pause.*]

OSCAR—[*Comes through the archway, a letter in his hand.*] Those waterproof coats haven't been ordered yet, Miss Paula. Shall I write and order some? [*He puts the letter down on the desk before her.*]

PAULA—Oscar . . . I hope you understand that . . .

OSCAR—[*Grinning.*] I understand. I can take my hat and go. [*Takes his cap out of his pocket.*]

PAULA—You guessed it.

OSCAR—Good-bye. Good-bye, everybody. [*Makes a deep bow to each in turn.*]

JUHASZ—Take a dozen pair of socks before you go.

OSCAR—[*Jovially; taps his pocket.*] I have.

JUHASZ—Take two dozen.

OSCAR—I took three. Good-bye, Miss Paula. [*He exits to the street.*]

PAULA—[*Calls sharply.*] Philip! [PHILIP *has been leaning resignedly against the shelves at back. Now he straightens up with a start, silently takes his hat and stick.*] No. You aren't dismissed.

[*She takes something out of her purse.*] What opera are they singing to-night?

PHILIP—[*Resentfully.*] Lohengrin.

PAULA—You go off at six to-night . . . and take this with my compliments.

PHILIP—[*Looks at the ticket; joyfully.*] Parquet . . . eighth row.

PAULA—It was the best I could get.

JUHASZ—[*Beaming.*] Philip, you'll see the swan to-night. [*The* THOROUGH YOUNG LADY *enters from the street.*]

THOROUGH YOUNG LADY—I knew I'd forget something. . . . I forgot to tell you that I don't want a period after each initial of the monograms on those handkerchiefs. . . . Just the letters without the periods.

PAULA—[*Graciously.*] Certainly, madame. We never have periods embroidered unless they are specially ordered.

PHILIP—[*Who has gone behind his counter.*] I'll make a note of it, madame, to be quite sure.

PAULA—Is there anything else you would like to-day? [*Comes around to the table.*] Are you interested in these girdles with antique silver buckles? They are just in from Paris. [*She holds one up.*]

THOROUGH YOUNG LADY—May I see?

PAULA—There are only a few, as you see, and they are selling very fast. So if you'd like one——

THOROUGH YOUNG LADY—I couldn't possibly afford one this month.

JUHASZ — That doesn't matter in the least, madame. Why, you can pay——

PAULA—[*Catches him up quickly, with unmistakable emphasis.*] For something cheaper, perhaps. Unfortunately we can't charge these girdles because we had to pay cash for them ourselves. They are not ordinary merchandise, you see. They are made by a new atelier in Paris which—— [*As she speaks, and* JUHASZ *watches her, enchanted,*]

THE CURTAIN FALLS

THE SWAN

A COMEDY IN THREE ACTS

By FRANZ MOLNAR

English text by Benjamin Glazer

COSTUME NOTES

HYACINTH: A dark brown robe, like that of the Carmelites. Snow-white hair.

ALBERT: In the first and third acts the uniform of an Austrian general. In the second act an Austrian general's full dress uniform, with many decorations, but without any insignia of rank.

WUNDERLICH: The uniform of a colonel of the Uhlans. Conspicuous shoulder straps on his tunic.

CÆSAR: Full evening dress, black bow tie, white gloves. In the third act a Redingot, with a big, white cravat.

LUETZEN: A light-colored sack suit in the first act. In the second act, evening dress, with decorations.

ALFRED: Evening dress, black tie, white gloves.

HUSSARS: Short black boots; red trousers; dark blue tunics, richly trimmed; white gloves.

PERSONS

Princess Beatrice
Symphorosa, *her sister*
Hyacinth, *her brother*
Alexandra, *her daughter*
Georg, Arsen } *sons of Princess Beatrice*
Dr. Hans Agi
Prince Albert
Princess Maria Dominica
Count Luetzen
Colonel Wunderlich
Countess Sibensteyn
Cæsar
Alfred
Chambermaid
The Governor's Wife
A Lady
Hussars, lackeys

The action takes place in the castle of the Princess Beatrice.

ACT ONE

ACT ONE

SCENE—*A pavilion in the garden which serves as a classroom for the young princes. At left an open door through which the garden can be seen, brilliant with sunlight. At right a glass door which leads into the other rooms. It is a summer afternoon. When the curtain rises* DR. AGI *is lecturing to* GEORG *and* ARSEN *at a table. The boys are listening attentively.*

AGI—. . . After a series of humiliations and protracted physical sufferings he died on the island of St. Helena, on the fifth day of May, 1821, at the age of fifty-two. He was buried on a promontory of the island on which, in his lifetime, he had loved to sit and contemplate the sea. His faithful attendants wished to inscribe the word "NAPOLEON" on his grave-stone. . . . But his tormentor, Hudson Lowe, persecuting him even beyond the grave, forbade it. The contemptible Hudson Lowe permitted them to inscribe only the words, "LE GENERAL BUONAPARTE." Later the body was conveyed to France in solemn state; and Paris honored the martyred emperor with magnificent funeral services. There, to this day, in the Dom des Invalides,

raised high on a majestically simple bier of stone, he lies at rest. [*He has concluded the lecture. The boys are silent, impressed.* AGI *looks at his watch.*] That finishes our lesson for to-day. [*Closes the book.*] Have your highnesses any questions to ask?

ARSEN—Last night we had a dispute with mother. She hates Napoleon. She said he was a usurper.

AGI—That's one point of view.

GEORG—How do you mean?

AGI—Your highnesses are free to form your own opinions. For my part, I consider him a genius who made his power felt throughout the world.

GEORG—Is that your point of view?

AGI—Yes.

GEORG—Then it's mine too.

ARSEN—That's what I call an independent opinion.

GEORG—So it is. . . . Not mine, but the professor's.

ARSEN—Mother was very angry.

AGI—With Napoleon.

GEORG—And with you.

AGI—What for?

GEORG—For not teaching us to hate Napoleon.

AGI—I present his story without bias of any sort.

ARSEN—We told mother that, but she thinks you ought to teach us to hate him.

GEORG—She says Napoleon is largely to blame for the dethronement of our family.

AGI—With all deference to her royal highness, that is a somewhat exaggerated view of the historical facts. Napoleon himself never altered in the political status of your illustrious family. If anyone can be blamed for it, it was the King of Württemberg.

GEORG—But the King of Württemberg was one of Napoleon's puppets.

AGI—Well, indirectly, there may be something in it. That is why I used the term exaggerated. And yet, if anyone can profit by a study of the courage, the initiative and the luck of Napoleon, certainly, in my opinion, a dethroned sovereign family can. Doesn't his career teach us that thrones are not unattainable? He was only an obscure attorney's son. Now what he could attain, surely someone, who by right of birth——

ARSEN—Mother——

GEORG—Mother is sensitive on the subject of thrones just now, because Prince Albert is staying with us.

ARSEN—Mother has always been sensitive about thrones.

GEORG—Prince Albert is heir-apparent to a real throne. And when mother lays eyes on an heir-apparent, she loses her appetite.

ARSEN—Poor mother! No wonder. Her great-grandmother was a ruling sovereign. Mother can't be reconciled to the fact that that glory's forever ended.

GEORG—Forever?

AGI—Yes . . . probably. . . . Nowadays it is very difficult to——

ARSEN—But suppose the Heir-Apparent marries Alexandra.

GEORG—He won't marry her.

ARSEN—How do you know he won't? If he does marry her, Alexandra will be queen some day and we, as her family, will be attached to the Court. And if I know my mother, it won't be Albert who'll do the ruling.

GEORG—*If* he marries her!

ARSEN—He'll marry her.

GEORG—Why should he?

ARSEN—Because mother wants him to. And because we all want him to,—Aunt Symphorosa, Alexandra herself, I, you, the professor——

GEORG—I don't want him to marry her. Do you, professor?

AGI—Indeed . . . there is no station so exalted that her highness, the Princess Alexandra would not grace it.

GEORG—Just the same, you don't want her to marry him.

AGI—I? Why do you say that?

GEORG—Because you spoke so coldly and formally.

AGI—I . . . I was surprised . . . that's all. It isn't easy to grasp . . . so suddenly. You see, during the few months in which I have been attached to your illustrious family—if I may put it so—her highness, your sister . . . great lady though she is . . . has been very kind to me . . . to us all. Among other things, it has been my privilege to instruct her in fencing . . . and when I am suddenly called upon to think that my pupil is to wear the ermine . . . that she is to wear a crown . . . and sit upon a throne . . . Well . . . that's not an easy thing to——

GEORG—I'd be sorry to leave this place . . . it's so pleasant here. The Hungarians have been so good to us. But, if we had to leave, you'd come with us, wouldn't you?

AGI—If I were wanted.

ARSEN—I shouldn't mind going. Life at Court might be tiresome; but politics, they say, are exciting. Keep you either trembling all the time . . . or laughing. [BEATRICE *and* ALEXANDRA *enter from the garden. All rise.*]

BEATRICE—Finished your lesson, I see.

AGI—Yes, your highness. [ALEXANDRA stands *silent and motionless down left.*] We reached the death of Napoleon about ten minutes ago; and it

seemed to me such an appropriate stopping place I didn't think it worth while to start a new chapter to-day.

BEATRICE—[*Sharply.*] An appropriate stopping place?

AGI—So I thought, your highness.

BEATRICE—A stopping place for the dead man, yes. But for us . . . merely a comma in an unfinished sentence. . . . Arsen! Georg! Prince Albert is coming to visit you here. He has expressed the wish to talk with you about your studies. I infer from what he said that he is particularly interested in history. Count Luetzen, whom I consulted later, has confirmed that inference. Now go wash your hands and faces, comb your hair, and change your clothes.

ARSEN—When is he coming?

BEATRICE—As soon as he awakes.

GEORG—Is he asleep?

BEATRICE—I said, "As soon as he awakes." Which should have conveyed to you the information that he is now asleep.

GEORG—It did, mother. That's why I asked you.

BEATRICE—That remark is superfluous. Arsen, I hear you have been coughing.

ARSEN—No, mother; only once or twice.

BEATRICE—Symphorosa tells me you have been

coughing. [*To* Agi.] Why haven't you reported it to me?

Agi—This morning his highness ate a green pepper and, despite my advice, neglected to remove the fibers. That is why he coughed. I didn't consider it serious enough to report to you.

Beatrice—You couldn't possibly have known whether it was serious or not. You're not a doctor.

Georg—[*To* Arsen.] That's what he gets for Napoleon.

Beatrice—What did you say?

Georg—Nothing, mother; I only coughed.

Beatrice—And you, I hear, were riding like a wild man this morning.

Georg—Did Symphorosa tell you that too?

Beatrice—Unmannerly boy! What I asked you was, why have you been riding like a wild man?

Georg—The horse was wild.

Beatrice—[*To* Agi.] Why didn't you report to me that the horse was wild?

Agi—The horse was tame before his highness got in the saddle.

Beatrice—You couldn't possibly have known that. You are not the stable master.

Georg—Then he couldn't have reported it either.

Beatrice—You are not to speak unless you are spoken to. Arsen will have his throat wrapped with

wet towels to-night, and, beginning to-morrow, you will ride no other horse than Pretty.

GEORG—Pretty? Oh, mother!

BEATRICE—Silence! [*They are suddenly silent.*] I have a surprise for you. You don't deserve it.

ARSEN—What is it?

GEORG—What?

BEATRICE—Guess.

ARSEN—Alexandra is going to be a queen. [*Great embarrassment. Silence.* ALEXANDRA *makes a startled movement.*]

BEATRICE—Ill-mannered boy! How *can* you say such a thing? I forbid you even to think of such things. See here! I hope it isn't you who puts such ideas into the boys' heads.

AGI—Heaven forbid, your highness!

BEATRICE—Where then did you get that idea?

GEORG—Why, I told it to him.

BEATRICE—And where did you get it?

GEORG—I thought of it myself.

BEATRICE—What?

GEORG—Don't be angry because I can see things for myself, mother. I have eyes in my head.

BEATRICE—If his highness, Prince Albert, weren't coming here soon I'd punish you severely. But don't suppose that you'll get off so easily. [*To* AGI.] And you might have reported to me that

the boys occupy their minds with such things.

GEORG—He couldn't possibly have known. He's not a member of the family.

BEATRICE—You Robespierre! Out of my sight! [*Utter silence.*] Now I'll tell you the surprise. My brother Karl—that is—Father Hyacinth is here.

GEORG—Uncle Karl!

ARSEN—Oh, I'm so *glad!* [*Both are wild with joy;* ARSEN *embraces* AGI.]

BEATRICE—Wild Indians!

ALEXANDRA—They're very fond of him, mother. I am glad he has come, too.

ARSEN—Glad! Professor, Uncle Karl is the nicest man in the world.

GEORG—He used to be a prince, and now he is in Holy Orders. A monk. Wears a cowl and a hood. And a scapulary.

BEATRICE—Those are mere externals. The essential thing is that he has a heart of gold and a brain of steel.

GEORG—So he has.

ARSEN—He renounced the world to enter an educational order.

AGI—Yes, your highness, I heard about it.

GEORG—But you never met him.

AGI—I have never had the honor.

GEORG—Well, you'll have the honor soon. . . . Mother, you couldn't possibly have brought us better news. Not even if you had come to tell us that Alexandra——

ALEXANDRA—Georg! . . .

BEATRICE—I shan't forget to have you punished.

HYACINTH—[*Calling from the garden.*] Beatrice!

BEATRICE—Ssh! Wasn't that someone calling?

HYACINTH—[*From the garden.*] Beatrice!

BEATRICE—Just as I thought! It's Hyacinth shrieking my name. His manners are appalling.

ARSEN—Uncle Hyacinth!

GEORG—Hyacinth! Hyacinth! [*They are about to rush out to meet him.*]

BEATRICE—Stay where you are. [*Sudden silence.*] Indians! I'll meet him myself, else he'll go on shouting until he awakens Prince Albert. [BEATRICE *goes out into the garden.*]

ALEXANDRA—[*To* AGI.] My mother forgot to tell you that his highness, the Prince, will later witness the fencing exercises.

AGI—As your highness commands.

ALEXANDRA—The necessary orders have been given at the gymnasium. First there is to be sword practice between you and the boys, then they are to have a bout with the foils.

AGI—May I ask whether your highness is to take part?

ALEXANDRA—No. [*There is a pause.*]

GEORG—Why not?

ALEXANDRA—[*Coldly.*] Because his highness particularly expresses his interest in *your* fencing. Are your costumes in proper condition?

AGI—Yes, your highness.

ALEXANDRA—How long will it take you and the boys to change?

AGI—Ten minutes will be plenty.

ALEXANDRA—I ask because the program has been rigidly fixed. When his highness has finished in here, he is to inspect my little rose garden, and from there he goes to the fencing exercises. The inspection of the garden will take, I estimate, about fifteen minutes.

AGI—I deeply regret that your highness is not to show your skill in fencing.

ALEXANDRA—I had expected to take part. But if I am to show him the garden there won't be time for me to change.

AGI—May I take the liberty to ask whether someone else mightn't show his highness the rose garden?

ALEXANDRA—Why do you ask that?

AGI—Then your highness could change your costume and take part in the fencing instead.

ALEXANDRA—[*Coldly.*] And why fencing instead?

AGI—I only . . . thought . . . your highness fences so well . . . and gracefully . . . and——

ALEXANDRA—And?

AGI—And anyone can show him the garden.

ALEXANDRA—Thank you. I am quite aware of that.

AGI—I beg your pardon, your highness. It's the pride of the teacher that prompts me to speak.

ALEXANDRA—The program is not regulated to suit your pride. And, in any case, I have no need of your advice on the subject. [*Raises her chin a bit imperiously.*]

AGI—As your highness commands. [*There is a brief pause.*]

GEORG—May I say something?

ALEXANDRA—Well?

GEORG—The professor is right. [*He goes to the door as voices are heard outside.* HYACINTH *and* BEATRICE *enter.*]

ARSEN *and* GEORG—[*Rushing to greet* HYACINTH.] Uncle Hyacinth! Hyacinth!

ARSEN—Welcome!

GEORG—How long are you going to stay?

HYACINTH—Now, now, now, not so boisterously. [*Draws back playfully.*]

BEATRICE—Indians!

GEORG—How long are you going to stay?

HYACINTH—I've scarcely arrived, and here you are asking me when I depart.

GEORG—Because we want you to stay a long time.

HYACINTH—It's a long time since I've seen you. [*Embraces each in turn.*] Let me look at you. Splendid color! [*Feels their arms.*] And muscle too, eh?

GEORG—How long are you going to stay?

HYACINTH—Not long, I'm sorry to say. [*Approaches* AGI, *who bows low.*] And this is your tutor, Mr. Agi, of whom I have heard so much. [*Shakes hands with him.*] Beatrice writes me excellent reports about you. I hear you are not only a good teacher but also an accomplished athlete. You row and fence . . .

ARSEN—And ride.

HYACINTH—That's splendid! And are you very fond of him, boys?

GEORG—[*Earnestly.*] Oh, yes, Uncle Hyacinth.

HYACINTH—Good! And you? Are you satisfied with your pupils?

AGI—Entirely, your royal highness.

HYACINTH—No, professor, not highness. Only an humble servant of Christ.

AGI—I beg your pardon, Father.

HYACINTH—Oh, you mustn't blush about it.

Else I shall reproach myself for having mentioned it. But then it's so charming of a doctor of philosophy to blush. I feel we're good friends already. [*Shakes his hand again.*] I congratulate you on your method. Culture seasoned with athletics—that's the ideal curriculum.

BEATRICE—Hyacinth is such a confirmed pedagogue, the teacher interests him more than the pupils.

HYACINTH—Quite so, my dear. Some day, when it's raining hard and we have nothing better to do, I'll explain to you why, for the good of the child, one should look first into the teacher's head. Well, boys, what have you learned to-day?

ARSEN—We finished Napoleon to-day. [*Glances at* BEATRICE. *There is an awkward pause.*]

HYACINTH—Mother doesn't care much for Napoleon, eh?

BEATRICE—No.

GEORG—Last night we had a dispute about——

ALEXANDRA—Now, Georg, don't begin that all over again.

HYACINTH—Why not? Tell me. What was the dispute about?

ARSEN—Mother thinks people should be taught to hate Napoleon.

GEORG—Especially our family.

HYACINTH—And what do you think?

AGI—I presented the story of Napoleon without bias of any sort.

HYACINTH—My dear fellow, then come with me and let me introduce you to the Historical Congress at London as one of the world's wonders. There is no neutral ground where Napoleon is concerned. One either hates him or loves him.

GEORG—He loves him, but he won't admit it.

HYACINTH—Why won't he admit it?

AGI—I have tried to let their highnesses form their own opinions about him. Nevertheless, I *have* pointed out to them Napoleon's initiative, his courage . . . and his luck.

HYACINTH—Quite right. If anyone can profit by studying Napoleon's career, the young people of this family can. . . . My dear fellow, you're blushing again.

GEORG—Because a little while ago he said the same thing, almost word for word.

HYACINTH—Ah, well, that doesn't prove it. But if we are in error, my friend, at least there are two of us.

BEATRICE—Time for you to get ready. [*To* HYACINTH.] Prince Albert will be here to visit them shortly.

HYACINTH—Then off with you. See you later, professor. [AGI *bows and exits with the boys.*]

BEATRICE—No matter what you say, I insist that the man was a usurper.

HYACINTH—What man?

ALEXANDRA—Mother never utters his name.

HYACINTH—Sorry. I had forgotten. [SYMPHOROSA *enters from the garden.*]

SYMPHOROSA—He is asleep.

HYACINTH—Who?

BEATRICE—The prince. [*To* SYMPHOROSA.] On which side is he lying?

SYMPHOROSA—Wait a moment. [*Reflects.*] On his right side.

BEATRICE—Then he is not lying on his heart.

SYMPHOROSA—No . . . On his liver.

BEATRICE—That's good. Now go back to your post, Symphorosa, keep careful watch and report everything to me.

SYMPHOROSA—Yes, dear. [*She exits into the garden.*]

HYACINTH—Does my sister Symphorosa keep watch over the Prince's slumbers?

BEATRICE—Yes. She is in constant touch with the adjutant who, on his part, peeps through the keyhole.

HYACINTH—And that goes on all day long?

BEATRICE—I have to keep informed about everything. He is my guest. That is no light responsibility.

HYACINTH—And how long has he been here?

BEATRICE—Four days.

HYACINTH—How much longer is he staying?

BEATRICE—According to program, he goes to-morrow. That's why I wanted you here sooner. He arrived unexpectedly, and here we were without a man.

HYACINTH—I started immediately I got your telegram. Albert has changed, hasn't he? He has become quite an attractive young man. [*He sits.*]

BEATRICE—He is very agreeable.

HYACINTH—He appeared genuinely glad to see me. He almost wept when we met.

BEATRICE—He was very fond of my lamented husband too. And he was only a child then.

HYACINTH—He embraced me cordially and kissed me at least four times. And he fairly beamed when he told me how much he loved you all.

BEATRICE—That's just it.

HYACINTH—What's "just it"?

BEATRICE—[*To* ALEXANDRA.] Will you go out into the garden a while, my dear?

ALEXANDRA—Yes, mother. [*She exits into the garden.*]

BEATRICE—[*Dries her eyes.*]

HYACINTH—What's wrong, my dear? Has anything happened?

BEATRICE—[*Her glances follow* ALEXANDRA *through the door out to the garden.*] I didn't care to speak of it in her presence. But that's just it. Nothing has happened.

HYACINTH—I don't understand.

BEATRICE—Albert told you how much he loved us all.

HYACINTH—Yes.

BEATRICE—Well, he has fallen in love with everyone here . . . except Alexandra.

HYACINTH—What did you expect in three days?

BEATRICE—Not love, perhaps . . . but at least some sign of interest in the girl. But no. Not the slightest advance. Though we did everything we could.

HYACINTH—Perhaps . . . there are . . . political reasons . . .

BEATRICE—[*With a smile.*] You underestimate me, Karl.

HYACINTH—Forgive me . . . I know you are the best informed woman in Europe.

BEATRICE—I'll show you my correspondence. Oh, I have no illusions on the subject. I know perfectly well that the only reason they are considering a marriage with us is because two or three royal families have made simultaneous advances and they can't afford to offend any of them.

HYACINTH—I see.

BEATRICE—And that is what makes me so anxious, Karl. The Czar wants him for Olga—Constantine's daughter. Edward would have liked to get him for England—for Patricia. Frederic has been telegraphing me every day from Vienna, and Amelie from St. Petersburg.

HYACINTH—So Albert must make up his mind quickly.

BEATRICE—Rome is out of the question for him. And so it is imperative for him to choose a wife immediately.

HYACINTH—Then he'll go to Montenegro.

BEATRICE—That is just what I am afraid of. He is a very obedient son. Dominica, his mother, dominates him utterly. And she has sent him everywhere. First to Dresden for Leopoldine Charlotte, but he didn't like her. She tends to corpulence. From there he went to Portugal. The Infantin Silvina Gonzaga. A most admirable girl, but incredibly ugly. So on he went to Belgium, to Maria Hermine, who is two heads taller than he is—And he rightly decided that such an alliance would make him look ridiculous in his people's eyes. And now he is here. And if we let him get away from us his next stop will undoubtedly be Montenegro. [*Dries her eyes.* SYMPHOROSA *enters from the garden.*]

BEATRICE—Well?

SYMPHOROSA—He stretched his hand outside the bed.

BEATRICE—What for?

SYMPHOROSA—For his lemonade.

BEATRICE—Was the lemonade there?

SYMPHOROSA—Yes, he drank it.

BEATRICE—I was so afraid it mightn't have been there! And then?

SYMPHOROSA—Then he turned over and went to sleep again.

BEATRICE—Thank you, dear.

SYMPHOROSA—Not at all, dear. [SYMPHOROSA *hurries off.*]

BEATRICE—[*Unhappily.*] These past three days have been a great trial to me, Karl. I am absolutely certain that he is here on account of Alexandra. And yet he has treated the girl as if she didn't exist. And not a word, not a sign from his mother, Dominica. If he had serious intentions, she'd be here by this time. [*Weeps.*]

HYACINTH—Beatrice!

BEATRICE—I am not myself. Think of it, we have only one day more. This afternoon, the ball to-night, and . . . if nothing happens . . . then our chances are gone, perhaps forever.

HYACINTH—And not a sign?

BEATRICE—Not one. I needn't tell you how I have watched for one.

HYACINTH—Perhaps Alexandra is——

BEATRICE—She is perfectly beautiful and clever and self-possessed . . . her poor father described her perfectly when he called her his swan. "My proud, white swan!" . . . And she is just like that, —majestic, silent, earnest . . . holds her head high . . . conducts herself irreproachably. Yet Albert is utterly indifferent to her. It's disheartening!

HYACINTH—Beatrice, it is not like you to lose control of yourself like this.

BEATRICE—[*Nervously.*] I know, but I can't help it. This is my last great battle, not mine alone but our family's. Now or never. Well, I mean to win if I ruin myself in the attempt. [SYMPHOROSA *speaks in the doorway.*]

SYMPHOROSA—He is sleeping peacefully.

BEATRICE—Thank you, dear. [SYMPHOROSA *vanishes.*]

HYACINTH—You mustn't agitate yourself like this. What will be, will be. And if it isn't successful this time, it will be next time.

BEATRICE—When? Albert is thirty-five. And Alexandra isn't getting younger.

HYACINTH—How old is she?

BEATRICE—. . . and twenty.

HYACINTH—What . . . and twenty?

BEATRICE—Nothing. Just "and twenty."

HYACINTH—That is a new number.

BEATRICE—Yes, my dear. I invented it myself. A mother's invention.

HYACINTH—I see. So she is just "and twenty."

BEATRICE—But she can't stay that way indefinitely. She is ripening. In a political family that wouldn't matter. But our daughters must be beautiful. My conscience has troubled me for making the poor girl wait as long as she has.

HYACINTH—One can't blame you for that. You are a devoted mother, my dear. But you are aware that our lives are ordered not for the individual's but for the family's good. The happiest royal family may be composed of unhappy individuals.

BEATRICE—Poor Xara.

HYACINTH—Who is that?

BEATRICE—Alexandra!

HYACINTH—Is that what you call her now?

BEATRICE—[*To* SYMPHOROSA, *who is entering.*] Well?

SYMPHOROSA—The situation is unaltered. [*She exits.*]

BEATRICE—Karl, I want you to help us.

HYACINTH—I? But, my angel, what can I do?

BEATRICE—You, with your charming personality——

HYACINTH—But, my dear child, it isn't me you want him to marry.

BEATRICE—Oh, you—man! Don't you understand that everything attractive in the setting adds luster to the girl?

HYACINTH—What does Alexandra think of the matter?

BEATRICE—Just as I do.

HYACINTH—Has she said anything about it?

BEATRICE—No, but she is worried. [SYMPHOROSA *enters quickly, her hand held agitatedly to her heart.*] Well?

SYMPHOROSA,—He is awake. [BEATRICE *makes a gesture of displeasure.*] Count Luetzen coughed outside his door.

BEATRICE—[*Quickly aghast.*] Accidentally?

SYMPHOROSA—No, on purpose.

BEATRICE—Wasn't the Colonel on guard?

SYMPHOROSA—Certainly. Count Luetzen came to the door expressly to cough.

BEATRICE—Why didn't the Colonel cough himself?

SYMPHOROSA—Because his cough is too loud. Count Luetzen coughs delicately. He always coughs his highness awake.

BEATRICE—What happened when he awoke?

SYMPHOROSA—He asked for eau de Cologne.

BEATRICE—Yes.

SYMPHOROSA—And a cup of weak tea.

BEATRICE—Yes.

SYMPHOROSA—Now don't be alarmed, dear. He got everything he asked for.

BEATRICE—And when is he coming to see the boys?

SYMPHOROSA—I forgot to ask.

BEATRICE—[*Excitedly.*] How could you? Hurry! Run! [SYMPHOROSA *goes out swiftly.*] She had to forget the most important thing of all! Heavens, and I am sure the boys aren't ready yet. [*Starts off at right.*]

HYACINTH—[*Restraining her.*] This won't do, my dear. Calm yourself, don't be over-anxious. Everything will be all right. The boys must have been ready long ago. . . . Really, dear . . . this isn't a bit like you. You always had such poise, such assurance——

BEATRICE—In times of peace, yes. But this is war! I'll go to meet him. You call the boys. My God——

HYACINTH—Calm yourself!

BEATRICE—Now, Karl, you only make me more nervous, talking like that. Can't you see I'm in the fever of the last hope . . . the finish of the race? . . . Now I must summon my last reserves of strength. . . . To arms . . . To arms . . . To arms! [SYMPHOROSA *enters breathlessly.*]

SYMPHOROSA—He's coming!

BEATRICE—When?

SYMPHOROSA—Now.

BEATRICE—Immediately?

SYMPHOROSA—Immediately, immediately! He has started already. I ran on ahead.

BEATRICE—Let's go to meet him. [*Hurries into the garden.* SYMPHOROSA *follows her.*]

HYACINTH—[*Calls through the doorway at right.*] Well, aren't you ready yet? [*The boys and* AGI *enter.*]

GEORG—We're ready. We've been waiting.

ARSEN—Is he coming?

HYACINTH—He'll be here any minute. [*To* AGI.] Tell me, my son, have you altered your opinion about Napoleon since our discussion?

AGI—No.

HYACINTH—And suppose my sister requests you to teach Napoleon according to her ideas.

AGI—Then I shall try to convince her highness——

HYACINTH—And if her highness still insists?

AGI—Then I shall regretfully take my leave.

HYACINTH—Shake hands. [*Shakes his hand.*] Now I know you better than I did a half hour ago.

GEORG—[*Who has been standing at the garden door, looking out.*] They're coming!

HYACINTH—You stay here. I'll go to meet them. [*Exits into the garden.*]

AGI—[*At the table.*] We will stand here . . . around the table . . . at the places where we always sit. Prince Arsen there, Prince Georg there, I here. And your highness, Georg, if you really meant what you said before about being fond of me——

GEORG—Don't worry. I'll be good.

AGI—Just this once. If you behave well, I'll take you up to the observatory to-night.

ARSEN—[*Joyfully.*] The observatory!

AGI—We'll have a look at Capella and Vega, and I'll explain the entire summer firmament to you.

GEORG—I'll be gentle as a lamb. [*There is a brief pause during which voices are heard in the garden.* PRINCE ALBERT *appears first. He is young, elegant, gracious. He wears a general's uniform. He enters, chatting with* HYACINTH. *After them come* BEATRICE, SYMPHOROSA, ALEXANDRA, LUETZEN, WUNDERLICH. *All take positions before the chairs where they will later sit.*]

ALBERT—[*Very good-humoredly, continuing a speech begun outside.*] . . . and, being a soldier, his cough is so incisive, so intrepid, so abrupt that . . . really, you know, it wakes one with a start. But Luetzen, on the other hand, Luetzen is a diplomat. He can cough delicately, and melodiously and suitably to every occasion. Luetzen can cough for you in such a discreet, persuasive crescendo that

you wake gradually and without shock. Curious that personal peculiarities should extend even to such things. Keen observation, what? Human. C'est humain. [*Looks around.*] Eh bien! Hello, you dear little boys. [*To* Agi, *who bows profoundly.*] Good morning! This would be the brilliant young professor. What? [*A pause.*] Why don't you sit down? [*He sits. The others sit simultaneously.*]

Beatrice—[*Ingratiatingly.*] Did you rest well?

Albert—It is really astonishing how well I sleep here. I don't know whether it's the fresh air, or that excellent bed, or the pleasant surroundings that soothe and refresh me so. A perfect balm to my nerves . . . really I am quite happy here. You may laugh, but it's true that I shall never forget the days I have spent with you here. Dear Beatrice . . . who thinks of everything for my comfort . . . this fine old castle, this gently rolling landscape, the peace, the harmony of the life you live here. . . . Oh, I . . . All I can say is that I have fallen in love with you.

Beatrice—[*Sweetly.*] We are very happy, Albert, to know that you are enjoying your visit.

Symphorosa—[*Sweetly.*] We have no other aim, Albert.

Albert—At night, when I am alone, Beatrice, I think of my poor father and your sainted husband

. . . Henry . . . How often they strolled together in this garden!

BEATRICE—Talking about their children.

ALBERT—They both were devoted fathers. They dedicated their lives to the welfare of their children.

BEATRICE—They never tired of discussing their children, you know. Always the children. The future of the children. What would become of them. How to direct them in the right path. [*Turns, chair and all, toward* ALBERT; *speaks with emphasis.*] How some day the children would rear a family of their own.

ALBERT—[*To* HYACINTH.] Sometimes at night I lean out of my window and fancy I see the two old men walking arm in arm along the path between those banks of beautiful roses——

BEATRICE—[*Edging her chair nearer* ALBERT.] They are Alexandra's roses. [*A pause.*]

ALBERT—How? *Your* roses?

ALEXANDRA—Mine, yes.

ALBERT—Did you plant them?

ALEXANDRA—Only some of them. But I tend them. [*A pause.*]

ALBERT—And . . . does that amuse you?

ALEXANDRA—Oh, yes. [*A pause.*]

ALBERT—And . . . don't you ever prick yourself?

ALEXANDRA—Sometimes. [*A pause.*]

ALBERT—Why don't you wear gloves?

ALEXANDRA—I usually do.

ALBERT—And . . . yet you prick yourself?

ALEXANDRA—Yes, through the gloves. [*A pause.*]

ALBERT—You ought to wear thicker gloves.

ALEXANDRA—Yes, I must try thicker ones.

ALBERT—C'est ça! That's life. One must be on one's guard.

BEATRICE—That's perfectly true! How good of you to be interested. Fancy! Such practical advice too!

ALBERT—[*Modestly.*] Oh, not at all . . . only . . . you see . . . one picks up a bit of experience here and there . . . what? [*A pause, and then he rises suddenly. They all stand up too.*] Well now, let's have a look at the boys. Is this your classroom?

ARSEN—Yes.

ALBERT—You are sixteen, aren't you?

ARSEN—Yes.

ALBERT—And you are seventeen?

GEORG—Yes.

ALBERT—Time flies. They are popping up fast, what?

BEATRICE—Indeed, yes, Albert.

ALBERT—You doubtless suppose that I shall examine you, like a school inspector.

GEORG—No, we don't.

ALBERT—Have no fear . . . I am a proper uncle. I shall only question your excellent young teacher.

BEATRICE—[*To* SYMPHOROSA.] He is falling in love with him too.

HYACINTH—I commend him warmly to your notice. He is a man of culture and an athlete; an astronomer and a swordsman.

ALBERT—[*Notices that they all are standing.*] Why don't you keep your seats? [HYACINTH, ALEXANDRA, BEATRICE *and* SYMPHOROSA *sit; the others do not.*] Good. I like that. It's the modern spirit. What are you working on now?

AGI—History, your highness.

ALBERT—Ah! That's always interesting. What period?

AGI—The beginning of the Nineteenth Century.

ALBERT—Napoleon.

AGI—Yes, your highness. [*Embarrassment.*]

ALBERT—You are interested in Pedagogy, aren't you, Karl?

HYACINTH—Yes.

ALBERT—Did you know that Napoleon proposed to establish a school for kings at Meudon?

HYACINTH—A very practical idea.

ALBERT—Yes, the pupils were to have been limited to boys in the line of succession to a throne. The program of study was very interesting. No

details at all. General instruction along broad lines. No science, only orientation; no theory, only practice. La Cases writes about it in his memoirs.

HYACINTH—He was the only one who could have made it practical.

ALBERT—Yes, yes, he could have made many things practical. A capital idea, too! A school from which you graduated with a monarch's diploma in hand. [*He laughs. The others respectfully echo his laugh.* ALBERT *looks around him.*] Well! . . . I'm glad to find you such fine healthy boys. Nice, deep-set eyes this chap has, what?

BEATRICE—[*Rises.*] Exactly like Alexandra's. It is marvellous how alike their eyes are. He resembles her in many ways.

ALBERT—[*Taking no notice of her remark.*] You oughtn't read too much, my boy. That's bad for the eyes. Sailors have the nicest eyes because they are accustomed to look upon vast distances. At the sea and sky.

HYACINTH—He'd like that. He wants to be a sailor.

ALBERT—And you?

ARSEN—I? An explorer.

ALBERT—Where?

ARSEN—The Pole.

ALBERT—Which Pole, my son?

ARSEN—The South Pole.

ALBERT—You are mistaken if you suppose it's any warmer there than at the North Pole. [*He laughs.*] And when do you start?

BEATRICE—[*Puts her arms about* ARSEN.] He starts this very moment with Georg to put on his fencing things. Uncle Albert wants to see how well you fence.

ALBERT—Indeed, yes, I am very much interested. [*The boys bow.*] See you later. [*To* AGI.] You too, what?

AGI—Yes, your highness, in the gymnasium.

ALBERT—Do you teach them fencing too?

AGI—Yes, your highness.

ALBERT—Splendid! You *are* versatile, aren't you? See you later. [AGI *and the boys exit.*]

ALBERT—[*Sits.*] He has a very tactful and sympathetic manner, this tutor. I am charmed with him.

HYACINTH—I liked him the moment I laid eyes on him.

ALBERT—And such a handsome young fellow.

BEATRICE—[*To* SYMPHOROSA.] I told you he'd fall in love with him.

SYMPHOROSA—Don't be upset about it, I beg of you.

ALBERT—Hah! [*Rises suddenly.*] And while we are waiting for the great fencing competition . . .

BEATRICE—We can show you a number of things

worth seeing. Now if you are interested in beautiful roses, there is Alexandra's own little rose-garden—— [ALEXANDRA *rises.*]

ALBERT—Oh, yes.

BEATRICE—[*Sweetly.*] The roses are her pride and joy . . . and there are some rare specimens among them.

ALBERT—[*Without enthusiasm.*] Splendid! [*His eyes seek out* WUNDERLICH.]

WUNDERLICH—[*Comes forward.*] Your highness may be interested in . . . the new dairy I saw here yesterday. An absolutely modern innovation. They milk the cows by vacuum.

ALBERT—By vacuum?

WUNDERLICH—Yes, your highness.

ALBERT—Like sucking up dust from a carpet?

WUNDERLICH—Exactly. It is most interesting.

ALBERT—But that sounds quite fantastic. One really must look at it. I have never seen anything like that before. [ALEXANDRA *sits down.*] And did you have it installed yourself, Aunt Beatrice?

BEATRICE—I installed it as an experiment.

ALBERT—You are really a remarkable woman.

BEATRICE—If I may say so, Albert, the dairy is quite far from here.

ALBERT—All the better. We need a little exercise.

BEATRICE—As you please. We'll go to the dairy then.

ALBERT—Oh, no . . . I shouldn't think of troubling *you* to come with me. I'll go with Luetzen and the Colonel. We'll make it a brisk walk.

HYACINTH—If you permit, I'll join you.

ALBERT—No, I can't have that. My sightseeing needn't inconvenience any of you.

HYACINTH—But——

ALBERT—No, no—— [*Starts to go.*] You mustn't feel obliged to run about with me as though I were a stranger. Forward, march, Luetzen. Coming, Colonel. When they are ready at the gymnasium send someone after us. [*He is in the doorway at left.*]

BEATRICE—I'll telephone.

ALBERT—But we shall probably be among the cows.

BEATRICE—Yes, I know.

ALBERT—Is there a telephone there?

BEATRICE—In every stall.

ALBERT—You really are a wonderful woman. Incredible! [*There is a pause; then he says suddenly*] Adieu! [*Exits quickly into the garden with* LUETZEN *and* WUNDERLICH. *There is another painful and dejected silence.* BEATRICE *sits down, despairingly.* ALEXANDRA, *greatly offended, exits at right.*]

HYACINTH—Well, he disposed of the rose-garden very neatly.

BEATRICE—[*Rises.*] What did I tell you? Could anything have been more pointed? You heard that Colonel. I scarcely got the rose-garden out of my mouth when he came forward with the cows.

HYACINTH—A coincidence.

BEATRICE—[*Heatedly.*] Was it? Well, I shan't be beaten by such a coincidence.

HYACINTH—I observed that your first attempts in that direction were without conspicuous success.

BEATRICE—I shan't give up as long as there is a ray of hope, an hour of time left.

SYMPHOROSA—What are you going to do now?

BEATRICE—There is only one way left.

SYMPHOROSA—What way?

BEATRICE—Only one. A terrible way.

SYMPHOROSA—You alarm me, Beatrice.

BEATRICE—Yes, you may well be alarmed. For what I propose to do is so reprehensible that, if anyone else did it, I'd despise her all my life.

HYACINTH—What in Heaven's name are you thinking of?

BEATRICE—God will forgive a mother anything she does for her child. And a widow what she does for the welfare of her family. [*She faces* HYACINTH *with tears in her eyes.*] You will forgive me.

HYACINTH—I have forgiven you already, but tell me what you mean to do.

SYMPHOROSA—I know you, Beatrice. When you start talking in that strain there is only one bit of advice I can give you. Don't do it.

BEATRICE—You will be good enough to hold your tongue. The whole difficulty lies in the fact that Albert's interest in the girl had not been aroused. His interest—as a man.

SYMPHOROSA—Merciful heaven!

BEATRICE—Why? Does it begin so shockingly?

HYACINTH—Rather disquietingly.

BEATRICE—Well, be prepared for worse. There are certain grounds beyond which Alexandra may not go. Alexandra can't flirt with him, for instance.

SYMPHOROSA—I am beginning to be reassured.

BEATRICE—Alexandra can't . . . throw herself at him.

SYMPHOROSA—Thank God for that.

BEATRICE—She wouldn't be capable of such a thing, and if she were, my pride wouldn't permit it.

HYACINTH—Well, then?

BEATRICE—A man's interest in a woman . . . can best be aroused . . . through the attentions of another man.

SYMPHOROSA—How shocking!

HYACINTH—Not yet. But it begins most curiously. Go on.

BEATRICE—Once Albert is made to see the woman in Alexandra, the rest will be easy for us. We have no time to lose. He goes to-morrow. . . . And he seems to have taken a fancy to the tutor.

HYACINTH—Ah!

SYMPHOROSA—Beatrice!

BEATRICE—[*Greatly excited.*] Be still! Do you think I am in the mood to consider your petty prejudices now?

HYACINTH—And what is it you propose to do with the professor?

BEATRICE—Invite him to the ball to-night.

SYMPHOROSA—The world will come to an end.

BEATRICE—And Alexandra will show him marked attention.

SYMPHOROSA—That . . . that . . . is worthy of Machiavelli's brain.

BEATRICE—It would never have occurred to me if Albert hadn't praised the professor. It was he who put the plan in my head. And it can't fail. A rival of his own rank might leave him quite indifferent . . . but a mere tutor . . . that is irresistible.

SYMPHOROSA—I shan't live through it.

BEATRICE—I command you to live through it. Alexandra will be attentive to the tutor . . . and . . . and Alexandra will dance a quadrille with the tutor. And God will forgive me, and God will for-

give Alexandra. And I shall never forgive the tutor.

HYACINTH—For what?

BEATRICE—For putting me under obligation to him.

SYMPHOROSA—[*Indignantly.*] Alexandra mayn't flirt with the Crown Prince, but she may flirt with a tutor.

BEATRICE—[*Dryly.*] That is quite different. It's like flirting with your horse.

SYMPHOROSA—Karl, how can you listen to such dreadful proposals and be silent?

HYACINTH—They are not dreadful proposals. They are mere feminine maneuvers which are not as considerable as you suppose. There is something else I am considering.

BEATRICE—What?

HYACINTH—The poor tutor.

BEATRICE—What has the tutor got to do with it? No one's harming him.

HYACINTH—Tell me, my dear, has Alexandra ever taken particular notice of the tutor before?

BEATRICE—How can you ask such a thing?

HYACINTH—That means she hasn't. And what do you suppose will happen, my dear, if she suddenly takes notice of him now——

BEATRICE—Oh, you needn't be afraid it will inspire the fellow with any false hopes. I'll see to that.

HYACINTH—I'm not so sure. The tutor is young

and temperamental. I admit I have no eye for such things any more, but just now, when I saw them together, it seemed to me that the young man looked at Alexandra respectfully, yet adoringly. As a cat might look at a canary in its cage, respecting it, yet . . . longing to devour it.

BEATRICE—You are not trying to suggest that he is in love with her?

HYACINTH—No. But certainly his interest is aroused.

BEATRICE—What of it?

HYACINTH—Only that it seems unjust to play with the young fellow in that fashion, and then cast him aside.

BEATRICE—Am I to understand that your sympathies are on the side of the tutor?

HYACINTH—My sympathies are on the side of the humanities.

BEATRICE—The possible disappointment of a mere tutor concerns you more than the happiness of your sister and your niece, and the historical destiny of your family.

HYACINTH—My dear sister, you have looked upon this robe of mine so often that you have ceased to notice it. It is true, I am more concerned with rectitude and fair dealing than with all your schemes about Albert's throne and Alexandra's crown. . . . I regard my fellow man not as a tool, but as a

creature of God. In my younger days, when I maintained a racing stable, I sometimes found it necessary to enter one horse merely to lead and set the pace for another horse, and at the finish to lag behind and let him win the race. But that was a horse, my dear sister. And whoever seeks to use a man in that fashion; whoever holds the tranquillity of a human soul so cheaply—she, my dear sister, she has great need of the excuse that maternal love impels her. That is my opinion, dear; and now I, too, am going to look at that vacuum. [*He exits quickly into the garden.*]

BEATRICE—[*With determination.*] Nothing shall hinder me! Stop crying! I command you to put that handkerchief away. I am desperate now. You needn't pay any attention to him. He always had opinions, but never manners. If it had been left to the men of our family we'd have been dethroned as early as the eighteenth century. Go, and send Alexandra in to me. [SYMPHOROSA *exits at right. There is a brief pause before* ALEXANDRA *enters.*]

ALEXANDRA—You sent for me, mother?

BEATRICE—Yes, my child. You are dearest to me in all the world. My blood flows in your veins. You will understand me.

ALEXANDRA—Yes, mother.

BEATRICE—Your will is as strong as my own.

ALEXANDRA—Oh, yes, mother.

BEATRICE—And if it falters you must lean on my will for support, and make yourself as steadfast and determined as I am.

ALEXANDRA—Yes, mother.

BEATRICE—You know what I am referring to, and what it is I want. Do you want it as much as I do?

ALEXANDRA—[*Calmly, earnestly.*] Yes, mother.

BEATRICE—Wounded vanity heals quickly. After all, roses *are* more beautiful than cows.

ALEXANDRA—Oh, mother——

BEATRICE—And there is no weapon more powerful than will. You understand me, my child?

ALEXANDRA—I understand, but I don't know what you want me to do.

BEATRICE—We mean to ask the professor to the ball to-night. You will invite him.

ALEXANDRA—[*Astonished.*] I, mother?

BEATRICE—Yes, you.

ALEXANDRA—The professor?

BEATRICE—Yes. [*There are tears in her eyes.*] I know it is a dreadful thing to ask of you, my child . . . but desperate necessity compels me to. Don't hate your mother for it, my poor, dear child . . . love me, for I love you so. . . .

ALEXANDRA—[*Calm and self-contained.*] Mother!

BEATRICE—[*Dries her eyes.*] Must I explain any further? You understand, don't you?

ALEXANDRA—I understand you, mother.

BEATRICE—I wanted to send to Vienna for a Duke, but there wasn't time. And that wouldn't have served as well, anyway——

ALEXANDRA—[*Coolly.*] As you wish. I shall invite the professor to the ball to-night.

BEATRICE—But not with that expression.

ALEXANDRA—I know, mother. With another expression.

BEATRICE—And you will promise him that [*bursts into tears*]—that he may dance a quadrille with you. [ALEXANDRA *is silent.*] Well? Why don't you speak?

ALEXANDRA—This comes very suddenly, mother.

BEATRICE—But our time is so short! Oh, if we only had more time! Well! Speak!

ALEXANDRA—Don't misunderstand me, mother. I only want a moment to get used to the thought. The professor is a plain farmer's son.

BEATRICE—Alas!

ALEXANDRA—And when I think that my arm will rest in his.

BEATRICE—You will wear long gloves, my child.

ALEXANDRA—It isn't touching him that matters, mother . . . but the thought of it.

BEATRICE—He is one of God's creatures, just as we are.

ALEXANDRA—I'll try to remember that, mother.

BEATRICE—Do you ask the flowers and the beasts of the field who their ancestors were?

ALEXANDRA—No, mother.

BEATRICE—[*Reassuringly.*] Of course not! You are friendly with horses and squirrels and all sorts of common animals, aren't you?

ALEXANDRA—Yes, mother, from that point of view it is a bit easier.

BEATRICE—There, you see, my dear.

ALEXANDRA—But . . . there is something else to consider.

BEATRICE—Speak freely. I will guide you.

ALEXANDRA—He is a human being, isn't he?

BEATRICE—[*Without conviction.*] Oh, certainly, certainly.

ALEXANDRA—He is likely to *think* about it. And that is the great difference between him and a squirrel.

BEATRICE—That is his affair.

ALEXANDRA—But it is possible that he may misunderstand me.

BEATRICE—You will do nothing that he can possibly misunderstand. My mind is easy on that score.

ALEXANDRA—Of course not, mother. And yet he can't help but notice my sudden change of manner toward him.

BEATRICE—That need give us no concern.

ALEXANDRA—But I must know what I am to do

if . . . of course . . . I only mentioned it because one ought to think of everything . . . if he should feel attracted to me.

BEATRICE—[*In alarm.*] You haven't noticed anything of the kind?

ALEXANDRA—That must be thought of too.

BEATRICE—Have you ever noticed anything of the kind in him?

ALEXANDRA—[*Coldly.*] I never notice what I don't want to notice.

BEATRICE—That means you have?

ALEXANDRA—I can't say that, but . . . he is not at ease when he speaks to me. He is not at ease.

BEATRICE—That signifies nothing, my child. Don't let it concern you. It's nothing to be ashamed of. It happens so often. Underlings of all sorts may be infatuated with a lady of high rank . . . officers, even physicians——

ALEXANDRA—But one mustn't—notice such things.

BEATRICE—Heaven forbid! But then the underling never dares to speak of his infatuation. Generally he works out his own salvation. Often in a most noble manner.

ALEXANDRA—But then——

BEATRICE—Don't trouble yourself about anyone else. Leave that to us. You need only keep your eyes on the future, looking neither to the left nor to the right, but always ahead of you.

ALEXANDRA—Yes, mother. [ALFRED *enters at right.*]

ALFRED—The professor reports to your highness that their young highnesses have put on their fencing costumes and are awaiting your highness' orders.

BEATRICE—The boys are to go to the gymnasium and wait there. The professor is to come in here. [ALFRED *exits at right. With tears in her eyes,* BEATRICE *turns to* ALEXANDRA.] Be strong, my poor, dear child. [*Kisses her, presses her hands warmly.*] Be strong—— [*She exits quickly into the garden. For a moment* ALEXANDRA *is alone, then* AGI *enters, in fencing costume. In his left hand he holds a fencing mask, in his right a sword. He stands stiff and formal at the door, awaiting orders. There is a pause.*]

ALEXANDRA—[*Stands down left; speaks without looking at him.*] To-night, . . . I understand there will be a rare astronomical spectacle.

AGI—Yes, your highness.

ALEXANDRA—What sort?

AGI—Vega and Capella may be seen to best advantage to-night.

ALEXANDRA—What is . . . Vega?

AGI—The chief star of Lyra. A green star which is a thousand times brighter than the sun.

ALEXANDRA—And the other?

AGI—Capella. A golden star, very beautiful.

ALEXANDRA—You intended to show them to the boys to-night.

AGI—Yes, your highness, in the tower.

ALEXANDRA—You love the stars.

AGI—Very much, your highness.

ALEXANDRA—And you know all about them?

AGI—I know very little about them, your highness. But even that little is marvellously beautiful.

ALEXANDRA—There will be no star-gazing to-night.

AGI—As your highness commands.

ALEXANDRA—We are having a farewell reception to-night in honor of the Crown Prince. He goes away to-morrow.

AGI—Too bad.

ALEXANDRA—The official personages of the neighborhood have been asked to come. There won't be many. I have expressed the desire that . . . you be invited too. [AGI, *wide-eyed with astonishment, comes a pace or two nearer.*] That is why I said you couldn't look at the stars to-night.

AGI—[*Modestly.*] I am very happy, your highness; and if anything could make me happier, it is the privilege of receiving the invitation from your highness' own lips.

ALEXANDRA—The reception is likely to be stiff and formal. I hope you won't be bored.

AGI—I couldn't be bored where your highness was.

ALEXANDRA—In case you do find the society of offi-

cials and councillors tiresome, you may come to me.

AGI—[*Astonished.*] If your highness will allow me——

ALEXANDRA—Then, for once, perhaps you may speak to me about something else than fencing tricks. That's all you have ever spoken to me about.

AGI—It wasn't for me to choose, your highness.

ALEXANDRA—You will talk to me about the stars . . . about the green star and the golden star.

AGI—I shall esteem it a privilege, your highness. [*There is a pause.*]

ALEXANDRA—Curious. I am a bit afraid of you now.

AGI—Why, your highness?

ALEXANDRA—You look so martial in that costume and with that sword in your hand.

AGI—Your highness has often seen me like this . . . in the gymnasium.

ALEXANDRA—That was different. There I had a sword in my hand too. But here I feel so defenseless.

AGI—Do I look so terrifying?

ALEXANDRA—I shouldn't say—terrifying.

AGI—What then?

ALEXANDRA—Rather aggressive.

AGI—[*Astonished.*] It is curious, your highness . . . but I have the unaccountable feeling that I am wholly on the defensive . . . now. . . .

ALEXANDRA—Well, then, you'll come, won't you.

AGI—Yes, your highness.

ALEXANDRA—And won't you regret the green star?

AGI—No, your highness.

ALEXANDRA—At nine, then.

AGI—Thank you . . . your highness.

ALEXANDRA—Not at all . . . Professor. [*She nods curtly and exits at left into the garden.* AGI's *puzzled, thoughtful glance follows her until she has vanished. Then he stands a moment, head high, eyes blazing, before*

THE CURTAIN FALLS

ACT TWO

ACT TWO

THE BALL.—*A magnificent, brilliantly illuminated room. Big double doors at left and right. High arches in the back wall give out into a corridor, and beyond each arch is a tall glass door, curtained with some transparent material.*

Down right a table is laid for seven. Two tabourettes stand between the table and the audience. Soft music can be heard off stage. It is midnight.

When the curtain rises CÆSAR *is pouring wine into the glasses and putting the finishing touches to the table arrangements. Finished, he goes to the door at right and stands, immobile as a statue.*

The glass door back left opens; SYMPHOROSA *enters. For a moment the music sounds louder, a glimpse of people dancing can be seen; then the door is closed.*

SYMPHOROSA *stops, looks back as if she is expecting someone to follow her. After a brief pause the door is opened again and* BEATRICE *enters.*

BEATRICE—Did you beckon me to come out?

SYMPHOROSA—Yes.

BEATRICE—What do you want? Why do you act so mysteriously?

SYMPHOROSA—I didn't want to whisper to you in there.

BEATRICE—Don't be excited! What's the matter? Tell me calmly.

SYMPHOROSA—Beatrice, I think that Alexandra has been sitting in that corner with the professor altogether too long.

BEATRICE—For the first time in my life, Symphorosa, I think you are right.

SYMPHOROSA—It seems to me she is going just a bit further than is strictly necessary.

BEATRICE—Apparently I have made a mistake in the size of the dose. But don't worry, my dear.

SYMPHOROSA—She should be told that she has done enough for the present. Let her keep away from the professor a while.

BEATRICE—Very well, Symphorosa, go and tell her to keep away from the professor. Only how will you tell her?

SYMPHOROSA—I'll signal to her. Like this. [*She indicates how.*]

BEATRICE—That's right, my dear. [*Embraces her affectionately.*] You are a darling!

SYMPHOROSA—And you are the cleverest woman in the world.

BEATRICE — Only the cleverest in this room. [SYMPHOROSA *makes a gesture of protest.*] For in the next room is a cleverer woman than I: my daughter. [SYMPHOROSA *sighs.*] Don't sigh. You'd do better to admire her poise and tact. And the effect it has had. Albert remarked to me twice that to-night for the first time he has begun to notice how beautiful she is. He won't go away to-morrow. Wait and see. And the day after to-morrow his mother, Maria Dominica, will be here. [*Noticing* SYMPHOROSA's *impatience.*] You are impatient, my dear. Well, go and signal to her. [SYMPHOROSA *hurries off into the ballroom.* BEATRICE *watches her exit with a contented smile, then looks around the room, sees* CÆSAR.] Cæsar!

CÆSAR—Your highness.

BEATRICE—Is everything ready?

CÆSAR—Yes, your highness.

BEATRICE—The table?

CÆSAR—Seven covers. For his royal highness, the family, the adjutant and the professor.

BEATRICE—You will be sure that the service is flawless.

CÆSAR—Your highness!

BEATRICE—What is the menu?

CÆSAR—Everything his royal highness likes. His

excellency, Count Luetzen, was good enough to indicate to me the dishes his royal highness prefers for supper.

BEATRICE—What are they?

CÆSAR—Cold bouillon.

BEATRICE—Yes.

CÆSAR—Cold salmon.

BEATRICE—Yes.

CÆSAR—Cold beef.

BEATRICE—Yes.

CÆSAR—With his own mustard.

BEATRICE—His own mustard?

CÆSAR—With his royal highness' own mustard.

BEATRICE—And what may that be?

CÆSAR—His royal highness carries his own mustard wherever he goes.

BEATRICE—That is a new custom!

CÆSAR—The chef says it is a very ancient custom. Eminent Greeks of olden times always brought their own spices to the table of their host.

BEATRICE—Is the chef such a learned man?

CÆSAR—Yes, your highness. He also told me that the Greek gourmands used to wear a protective shell over their tongues, which they only removed at mealtimes.

BEATRICE—[*Gives him a look of stern reproof.*] I didn't ask you that.

CÆSAR—No, your highness. I took the liberty of mentioning it as a curiosity. . . .

BEATRICE—You will only answer my questions.

CÆSAR—Yes, your highness. And cold chicken.

BEATRICE—What's that?

CÆSAR—Cold chicken—after the beef.

BEATRICE—What time will supper be served?

CÆSAR—In twenty-four minutes, your highness. And an ice.

BEATRICE—The menu is too cold for me. In my cup you will serve hot tea, without sugar.

CÆSAR—I am afraid, your highness, that hot tea may be distinguishable from the cold bouillon . . . by the vapor.

BEATRICE—You will see to it that the hot tea has no vapor.

CÆSAR—I don't know just how that can be done, your highness, but it will be.

BEATRICE—I shall expect it to be. [CÆSAR *steps back as* SYMPHOROSA *re-enters.*] Well?

SYMPHOROSA—I signaled to her.

BEATRICE—Yes.

SYMPHOROSA—And she stood up immediately.

BEATRICE—Good. Now go and see that Arsen puts those cold towels around his neck.

SYMPHOROSA—What a perfect mother you are!

BEATRICE—There is no other joy on earth.

[SYMPHOROSA *exits at left. She addresses* CÆSAR.] Where is supper to be served from?

CÆSAR—From here, your highness. [*He claps his hands twice. A procession of servants enters, slowly, single-file.* ALFRED, *platter in hand, comes first. After him come two lackeys, each carrying a platter, borne ceremonially aloft. In the rear are two Hussars with champagne buckets.* ALFRED *and the two lackeys go to the table and, their backs to the audience, lay the three platters on the table. Simultaneously the two Hussars deposit their buckets on the floor near the wall at right. Then the Hussars take their station to the left of the right hand arch while the two lackeys stand in profile between the arch and the doorway at right.* ALFRED *stands between them, bowing.*]

CÆSAR—Voilà!

BEATRICE—Bravo, Cæsar! [*She hurries off into the ballroom.* CÆSAR *bows profoundly.*]

CÆSAR — [*When the door has closed behind* BEATRICE.] Hussars! [*The Hussars come forward. He inspects them from head to foot.*] Right about, face! [*They obey the order. He adjusts their tunics.*] Left face! [*They obey.*] Very good. [*The Hussars step back.*] Alfred! [ALFRED *comes forward slowly, and with dignity.*] Son Altesse Royale Madame la Duchesse prendra au lieu du consommé froid du thé chaud. Mais du thé

chaud *non fumant*. Le thé doit faire comme couleur absolument l'impression d'un consommé froid.

ALFRED—Javoll! Sie können sich bestimmt auf mich verlassen. Alles wird in Ordnung sein.

CÆSAR—Vabene mio caro, vabene, vabene, grazia, grazia. [ALFRED *exits, followed by the two lackeys. The Hussars occupy themselves with the wine buckets and bottles.* CÆSAR *supervises their activities and gives them whispered orders. Meantime* ALEXANDRA *has entered back left. Behind her, almost beside her, comes* AGI. *His demeanor is a curious mixture of deferential formality and blissful intimacy.*]

ALEXANDRA—Cæsar!

CÆSAR—Your highness.

ALEXANDRA—Is supper to be served in here?

CÆSAR—Yes, your highness. The guests will be served at small tables in the yellow salon. His royal highness and the family in here. Her highness, your mother, was here just a moment ago.

ALEXANDRA—Oh, then everything has been looked after. How soon will supper be served?

CÆSAR—In seventeen minutes. Has your highness any orders?

ALEXANDRA—Nothing, thank you. [CÆSAR *returns to the wine buckets. At his signal the Hussars exit. During the following scene* CÆSAR *is very busy between the serving table and the supper table. But he is listening.*]

AGI—May I escort you back to the ballroom?

ALEXANDRA—Please don't. . . . I am afraid you misunderstood me. When I said I was going in to look at the table . . . I . . . I didn't mean for you to come with me.

AGI—Your highness, I beg your pardon. [*Is about to withdraw.*]

ALEXANDRA—Wait . . . don't go. [*Embarrassed.*] Perhaps I put it a bit too strongly. I didn't mean it that way.

AGI—Please, your highness. [CÆSAR *discreetly exits back right.*]

ALEXANDRA—Forgive me. I am unpracticed in such things. I didn't mean to be rude.

AGI—I know, your highness. The reason I misunderstood was because while I was in the midst of my description of the constellation of the Eagle, your highness suddenly stood up . . . and so I thought I ought to stand up too, and finish the sentence on the way. I was saying that these seven stars represent a flying eagle and that the eagle's head——

ALEXANDRA—That's where I stood up.

AGI—Yes. And it never occurred to me that you were making your escape.

ALEXANDRA—Your stars *were* beginning to get tiresome.

AGI—I am sorry, your highness.

ALEXANDRA—I had expected to hear about the mysteries and the miracles of the sky, and you spoke only of names and numbers. I never knew the subject was so tedious.

AGI—The stars have their emotional side, too. But I didn't dare to speak of it.

ALEXANDRA—Perhaps . . . that might have been more exciting.

AGI—I could have told you how across those vast distances and beyond the millions of stars one's thoughts go on to God and His eternity . . . to life and death . . . to life— [*softly*] and love.

ALEXANDRA—[*Coldly.*] Can your imagination bridge such vast distances as that?

AGI—When I look up to you, your highness,—yes. [*There is a pause.*]

ALEXANDRA—[*More coldly.*] And eternity, too?

AGI—When I look down upon myself, your highness. [*Another pause.*]

ALEXANDRA—And you believe in such miracles?

AGI—If I didn't believe in miracles, your highness, how could I endure my life?

ALEXANDRA—Is it so unendurable?

AGI—It would be, if——

ALEXANDRA—If?

AGI—If I hadn't two—an outer and an inner life.

ALEXANDRA—Have you? I never noticed.

AGI—Because your highness believes in miracles, too. . . . You believe my cold and impassive face . . . cold and impassive . . . even when it is slapped.

ALEXANDRA—[*In surprise.*] Is your face slapped?

AGI—Every day.

ALEXANDRA—Who slaps your face? [*He does not answer.*] Who? Do we? Do I? [*He nods his head.*] Without knowing it?

AGI—They are the worst slaps of all.

ALEXANDRA—I must say . . . this is more mysterious than the stars. Do I hurt you?

AGI—Every day your highness looks upon a miracle. A man's face, his voice, all his outward appearance remain calm and unruffled . . . while inwardly he burns. And you never ask for the explanation of the miracle.

ALEXANDRA—The explanation?

AGI—[*With rising passion.*] Why does your highness suppose I endure it all? Why do I go on teaching, humbly, silently and submissively? Why do I stifle my individuality? Why am I here at all? [ALBERT *enters at left with two ladies.*]

ALEXANDRA—I never thought——

ALBERT—[*Good-humoredly interrupts.*] An ideal daughter of the house! Before the concert she looks after the musicians, and before supper she looks after the table. Her watchful eye is everywhere.

First Lady—Your highness ought to see her at the hospital among the poor sick people.

Alexandra—You mustn't flatter me, Countess. The praise is due to you and the other ladies. I am there because it is my duty to be.

Second Lady—Oh, your highness!

Albert—Delightfully modest, isn't she? I know. You have the same noble character as your dear mother. Good evening, Professor. [Agi *bows profoundly.* Albert *addresses the two ladies.*] A brilliant fellow, this young man. [*Starts up right with the two ladies.*] He is not only a scientifically trained astronomer and teacher but also a swordsman of the first rank. I saw him fencing with the boys this afternoon; and I must say: C'était parfait, absolutement parfait! [*Exits with the ladies as he speaks.*]

Alexandra—Now you are more melancholy than ever. . . . Why?

Agi—Shall I say it, your highness?

Alexandra—Is it anything I shouldn't hear?

Agi—[*Looking toward the door through which* Albert *has vanished.*] I am jealous, your highness. [*There is a pause.*]

Alexandra—I am grieved, Professor. Suddenly you have made me remember . . . those vast distances you spoke of before.

AGI—To-night . . . to-night they hadn't seemed so vast.

ALEXANDRA—Yes . . . to-night. . . .

AGI—To-night, for the first time, you looked at me as if I were a human being . . . a man. . . . Looked at me . . . and said friendly . . . intimate things to me——

ALEXANDRA—I said nothing that——

AGI—[*With growing boldness.*] What you said . . . and did . . . and looked . . . bewildered me, upset my balance, broke down my self-control . . . else I should never have spoken. There is a sort of poetry in hopelessness. Until to-night, at least I had that. It was beautiful in its way. But now it's gone, too. A pity!

ALEXANDRA—I don't know what to say . . . I wish I could give it back to you.

AGI—That's beyond your power, little princess.

ALEXANDRA—Don't call me that, if you please.

AGI—You see, I can't speak to you the way I used to. I am confused, your highness. But to-morrow . . . to-morrow . . .

ALEXANDRA—No, no, . . . it must be settled now. I don't want any more misunderstanding. I had better tell you . . . everything . . . though I'm terribly ashamed. . . .

AGI—Your highness?

ALEXANDRA—No, no, I can't tell you. . . .

AGI—I implore you, tell me. I—— [*Hopefully.*] Tell me. Obey your heart. Take courage, and tell me what above all things in the world I want to hear. . . .

ALEXANDRA—No, no; you are misunderstanding me again. But it's my fault. What I have to tell you is quite painful.

AGI—What is it, your highness?

ALEXANDRA—It's about a deception that has been practiced on you.

AGI—A deception? [*There is a pause.*]

ALEXANDRA—You are a gentleman, and you respect me.

AGI—Your highness. . . .

ALEXANDRA—And I can rely on your discretion.

AGI—Yes.

ALEXANDRA—Absolutely?

AGI—Absolutely.

ALEXANDRA—Yes . . . I know you to be a man of honor and a friend of the family . . . and I feel that I shall never have peace of mind again until I tell you. . . . My family . . . my mother has but one ambition in life,—to restore our family to its throne. And to that end she wants me to marry the Crown Prince. . . . You will understand . . . it is not easy for me to tell you this. . . . Every word I speak is like blood . . . flowing from a wound.

. . . Professor . . . the Crown Prince showed no interest in me, and my mother decided . . . that if someone else were here . . . some man . . . to whom I could be attentive . . . Albert's interest in me . . . might be aroused. . . . I want you to believe, Professor, that I never meant to hurt you . . . and that I am sorry, if I have. Before to-night . . . when I was cold and formal with you . . . it was because I knew that you were . . . not at ease . . . in my presence. My mother asked me to invite you to the ball to-night. I have never disobeyed her, but if I had known . . . if I could have foreseen . . . that a man's eyes would light up like that when his heart was aflame . . . that anyone would dare . . . to look into my eyes . . . as you have looked——
[*She pauses, walks slowly to the table, sits down.*]
Now I have told you, Professor. Now you know how you have been deceived. [*There is a pause.*]
Have you nothing to say?

AGI—[*His head is bowed.*] You only obeyed orders.

ALEXANDRA—I don't want to seem more blameless than I am. It is hateful of me to put all the blame on mother. [*After a pause, she continues earnestly, dreamily, almost sadly.*] I want to be a queen. [*Lets her head sink on her arm. There is a pause.*]

AGI—[*Softly.*] That means . . . I may go now.

ALEXANDRA—Why do you say that?

AGI—I have served my purpose.

ALEXANDRA—[*Rises.*] I am afraid I shouldn't have told you. How strangely you look at me! [*The music stops.*]

AGI—Something is broken in me. . . . Why did you tell me?

ALEXANDRA—Shouldn't I have told you?

AGI—Why did you tell me?

ALEXANDRA—Because I respect you. I want to be friends with you.

AGI—Do you? How touching! . . . Like the good princess in the fairy tale. But I am not a lad any more . . . to believe in fairy tales.

ALEXANDRA—Are you going to . . . punish me?

AGI—I adore you . . . humbly and hopelessly again. [*Bitterly, earnestly, mockingly.*] You needn't be afraid of me. I know my place. I am still an obedient servant to your illustrious family. And what though I may be wounded a bit and bleeding, I cannot but be honored by the exalted rôle that has been entrusted to me. It is even beginning to amuse and interest me.

ALEXANDRA—You sound insincere.

AGI—Perhaps only bitter.

ALEXANDRA—[*Uneasily.*] And I thought it was a kindness to tell you the whole truth.

AGI—You have no further need of me. The bride-

groom has caught fire; the teacher can be extinguished.

ALEXANDRA—I won't have you think such things of me, or say such things to me.

AGI—Have no fear. I am silent and I serve. Don't look at me so distrustfully. Let us smile and act as if nothing has happened. [ALBERT *appears at back.*] Can't you smile? See, I can. We were talking about the eagle. [*Louder.*] And the head of the eagle—— [ALBERT *enters with* BEATRICE *and the two ladies.*]

ALBERT—Still here?

ALEXANDRA—The professor has been telling me such interesting things. There is an uncommon astronomical spectacle to-night.

ALBERT—Where?

AGI—[*Uneasily.*] In the sky, your highness.

ALBERT—I know that. But which stars?

AGI—It is not really anything uncommon. Only that a few so-called summer stars may be observed to particularly good advantage to-night. Capella, Arcturus, Vega and the constellation of the Eagle [*with significance*], which consists of seven stars, which seven stars form a flying eagle; and the head of the eagle . . .

ALBERT—[*Significantly.*] I had no idea this was such an interesting night.

ALEXANDRA—[*Nervously.*] And the head of the eagle——

ALBERT—You are very much interested in the stars, aren't you, Alexandra?

ALEXANDRA—I never thought much about them until to-night.

ALBERT—Thought more about roses—what? But to-night the sky is illuminated—what? A beautiful summer night. [*Significantly.*] The stars shine like eyes.

BEATRICE—If you are interested, we have a very good observatory in the tower.

ALBERT—Have you? I didn't know.

ALEXANDRA—Oh, only an amateur's observatory.

ALBERT—Doubtless the brilliant professor fitted it up. The young man of a thousand talents . . . what?

AGI—No, your highness, it was here when I came.

ALBERT—I wonder you didn't mention it before.

ALEXANDRA—You go to bed so early. And the stars have no regard for etiquette.

ALBERT—Bravo! That retort was so clever the Professor himself might have thought of it. What?

ALEXANDRA—No, Albert. I thought of it myself.

ALBERT—[*To* HYACINTH, *who has just entered with* SYMPHOROSA.] Did you hear what she said?

HYACINTH—Who?

ALBERT—Xara. She said the stars have no re-

gard for etiquette. [*A gong sounds.* CÆSAR, *the two* HUSSARS *and* ALFRED *enter. The* COLONEL *enters back left.*]

BEATRICE—We dragged the doctor away from his beloved stars to-night.

HYACINTH—And also the poor boys.

SYMPHOROSA—Yes, the poor boys looked forward to it all day. They are delighted with any excuse for not going to bed early.

HYACINTH—Well, they can see them to-morrow. Fortunately the stars are eternal, eh? One can always put them off until to-morrow. [*The two ladies exit back left.*]

ALBERT—I didn't know you had an observatory.

HYACINTH—Oh, yes. Ever since my late brother-in-law, Henry, bought a big telescope. You have seen it often, colonel.

WUNDERLICH—Oh, yes. Once I burned my tongue up there.

ALBERT—With the telescope?

WUNDERLICH—No, your highness. There was some acid in a cup up there, and I tasted it.

SYMPHOROSA—I can imagine what an impression it must have made on you.

WUNDERLICH—I shall never forget it, your highness.

BEATRICE—I think, Albert, it is time to eat something.

ALBERT—I hope to eat a great deal. I always have a ravenous appetite at night. Haven't I, Wunderlich?

WUNDERLICH—God be thanked, your highness.

ALEXANDRA—[*To* AGI, *low.*] I shouldn't like them to read in your face what we have been talking about. [ALEXANDRA *and* AGI *stand down stage left;* HYACINTH *and* ALBERT *at center, a trifle back;* BEATRICE *and* SYMPHOROSA *down right in front of the table.*]

ALBERT—Xara is absorbed in the science of the stars.

AGI—[*To* ALEXANDRA.] I'll try, your highness, but I am afraid it's too late.

BEATRICE—[*To* ALBERT.] She takes a keen interest in the education of the boys. She supervises their studies.

ALEXANDRA—That sounds as if you are threatening me.

ALBERT—Xara will be an astronomer yet.

HYACINTH—Hardly a career to attract a woman.

ALEXANDRA—I have offended you deeply.

AGI—Yes, your highness.

ALEXANDRA—Won't you forgive me?

AGI—No, your highness. [ALBERT *comes slowly toward* ALEXANDRA.]

SYMPHOROSA—[*To* BEATRICE, *in an agitated whisper.*] Something has happened between them.

BEATRICE—Don't say such things to frighten me, or I shall faint on the spot. [*She moves toward* AGI.]

ALBERT—[*As he joins* ALEXANDRA.] Xara, will you leave the starry firmament, and come down to earth a while? May I offer my arm?

ALEXANDRA—[*Takes his arm; nervously.*] What an *unexpected* honor, your highness.

SYMPHOROSA—[*To* BEATRICE.] See how excited he is. His ears are red. Better send him away at once.

BEATRICE—Leave him to me. I'll send him away.

ALBERT—[*Escorting* ALEXANDRA *slowly to the table.*] First you neglect me, and now you make fun of me.

ALEXANDRA—I neglect you? How can you say that? [AGI *has slowly followed* ALEXANDRA.]

BEATRICE—[*Intercepting him at center.*] You seem to be in bad humor, Professor.

AGI—No, your highness. If you will permit me to say so, this is the happiest night of my life.

BEATRICE—But you do seem nervous . . . and agitated.

AGI—It's the unaccustomed surroundings, your highness.

HYACINTH—[*At the table, to* ALEXANDRA.] You seem agitated, my child. But no matter, you are all the prettier when your cheeks are flushed.

ALEXANDRA—[*At the table.*] I always get flushed when I hear music.

BEATRICE—If you are tired, we will excuse you. Don't forget you must be up early in the morning.

AGI—I am not tired, your highness. On the contrary I am only beginning to be awake.

ALBERT—[*To* ALEXANDRA.] Do you love music?

BEATRICE—[*Calls to him.*] She adores music. She sings, too!

ALBERT—And you never sang for me!

SYMPHOROSA—[*Who is standing with* BEATRICE *and* AGI.] Don't hesitate to go, Professor, if you are sleepy.

AGI—Sleepy, your highness? Why, I just woke up . . . not five minutes ago.

ALEXANDRA—[*To* ALBERT.] I hesitate to sing for you. You know so much about music.

ALBERT—I? About music? That's capital! Did you hear that, Wunderlich?

WUNDERLICH—I heard, your highness.

BEATRICE—[*To* AGI, *again obstructing his way.*] You *are* in a bad humor, Professor. Suppose we send your supper up to your room.

AGI—I'll eat my supper here. [BEATRICE *is startled by his tone.*]

ALBERT—Well, Aunt Beatrice, are you studying astronomy, too? Do you want to starve us to death?

BEATRICE—[*Hurries to the table.*] God forbid, dear Albert.

SYMPHOROSA—[*As she, too, goes to the table.*] We are lost!

ALBERT—I have always observed that my appetite is keenest at night.

HYACINTH—There you are like Louis XIV.

BEATRICE—Shall we sit down? [ALBERT *and* ALEXANDRA *sit.*] Sit here, Professor. [*Indicates the place between* SYMPHOROSA *and her. But* AGI *sits next to* ALEXANDRA.]

AGI—Thank you.

BEATRICE—Not there, Professor . . . here!

AGI—[*Does not stir.*] This will do very well, thank you. [*Painful silence. Shaking his head,* HYACINTH *sits.*]

SYMPHOROSA—[*Whispers to* BEATRICE.] We are lost! I know there's going to be a scandal.

ALBERT—The Bourbons had healthy appetites by day as well. Louis XVIII. once consumed fifteen lamb chops at a public dinner. Imagine how much he must have eaten when no one was looking. That disgusts you, doesn't it, Beatrice? You are not listening.

BEATRICE—[*Nervously.*] Indeed I am. Louis XV. consumed eighteen lamb chops.

ALBERT—No, it was the eighteenth Louis and the

fifteenth lamb chop. [*The lackeys, at the serving table, are preparing to serve the soup.*]

BEATRICE—[*Sweetly.*] I hope you like cold bouillon, Albert.

ALBERT—My favorite summer beverage.

BEATRICE—I am so glad.

SYMPHOROSA—[*Sweetly.*] What a fortunate coincidence!

HYACINTH—How long they are taking to serve it.

BEATRICE—Here it comes now, dear. [CÆSAR, *the two* HUSSARS *and* ALFRED *serve the soup.*] You can't keep it on the table, for it gets warm. [*Each is served, and tastes the soup. Ceremonial silence.*]

AGI—[*Unexpectedly, though not loudly, breaks the silence.*] And the head of the eagle—I really must finish that sentence—is a star called Altair or Alpha Aquilæ, the star whose brilliant green radiance illuminates the sky to-night. That is what I wanted to say.

ALEXANDRA—You had quite a difficult time reaching the end of that sentence.

ALBERT—Doubtless the professor speaks so beautifully because Xara likes to listen to him.

BEATRICE—It was beautiful, but I didn't understand a word of it.

AGI—I don't know how to speak beautifully. Her highness reproached me with it just a while ago.

ALBERT—[*To* ALEXANDRA.] Did you?

ALEXANDRA—Yes.

BEATRICE—[*To change the subject.*] Is the soup cold enough, Albert? [*Music begins.*]

ALBERT—Just right.

WUNDERLICH—His highness likes his soup at eight degrees Celsius.

HYACINTH—Beautiful speech is not the most important thing. What counts is the fact that he has studied a great deal, and knows a great deal.

AGI—Perhaps the reason I can't speak well is that I have never done anything but study.

HYACINTH—That never hurt you, my boy.

ALBERT—How many hours a day did you study?

AGI—Usually—ten. . . . And as many every night.

ALBERT—Ten and ten are twenty. [*He rises.*]

BEATRICE—What are you looking for, my dear?

ALBERT—The salt.

WUNDERLICH—Here it is, your highness.

ALBERT—Thanks. [*Resumes his seat; takes the salt.*] That left you four hours for sleep.

AGI—Not that many—sometimes.

ALBERT—That is very bad. I need fifteen hours' sleep myself. [*A pause.*]

SYMPHOROSA—I need eight. [*A pause.*]

HYACINTH—I need six. [*A pause.*]

SYMPHOROSA—[*To* WUNDERLICH.] And you? [*A long pause.*]

WUNDERLICH—Two.

AGI—It is a matter of individual habit. For instance, Napoleon—— [*Stops suddenly. A painful silence. Each sips his bouillon. The cups are put down simultaneously.*]

BEATRICE—And so you can't speak properly because you've studied too much?

AGI—The many things one takes in from books must first dissolve themselves in the blood, your highness. They must ferment like wine. Then only will they release that beautiful bouquet, that fine fragrance called poetry. There is a bit of poetry in every man, but many things must happen before it becomes articulate.

ALBERT—A pretty woman . . . what?

AGI—Perhaps. . . .

BEATRICE—But . . . Albert. . . .

HYACINTH—It depends on the woman. . . . I have met women who stifled the poetry in a man.

BEATRICE—They are quite right. I don't like poets.

AGI—It depends on the man. . . . I have met men whom no woman can hurt. I envy them.

ALEXANDRA—Why? [*The bouillon cups are removed.*]

AGI—Because I am so easily hurt myself.

ALBERT—By women?

AGI—By any intense emotion. I am supersensi-

tive, I suppose. What another man would only laugh at—might do me irreparable injury.

ALBERT—But that is really unnecessary.

AGI—I know.

BEATRICE—And not very probable.

ALBERT—But I daresay you have had your experience with women.

AGI—No, your highness. Only with books. [ALFRED *serves from a platter. Only* HYACINTH, ALBERT *and* WUNDERLICH *help themselves.*]

ALBERT—Oh, come now!

AGI—It is true, your highness. My first taste of the world was here. I came here straight from my books. And it would be a pity . . . if anything happened . . . to drive me back to them again.

HYACINTH—It *would* be a pity!

AGI—Please, don't misunderstand me. It is not myself I am thinking about . . . but—I have a mother . . . and you see . . . I am the only son . . . all she has. And I have a sister, too. . . . She isn't pretty, poor girl, but I have educated her . . . done all I could for her. I'd like to see her happily married . . . and then—— [*Looks about him.*] I beg your pardon, I didn't realize I was the only one speaking.

ALEXANDRA—Go on. Go on. . . . I am very much interested in what you are saying.

AGI—And there is also my old teacher, Dr. Waldbrott.

HYACINTH—Of the University of Heidelberg?

AGI—Yes, father, he lectures there.

ALBERT—On what subject?

AGI—Astral Chemistry.

ALBERT—[*To* HYACINTH.] Tell me what that is.

HYACINTH—The chemistry of the heavenly bodies.

ALBERT—Oh!

HYACINTH—I know the old gentleman. An admirable man and an eminent scholar.

AGI—Yes, isn't he? He . . . honors me with his confidence.

ALBERT—Chemistry of the heavenly bodies?

AGI—Yes.

ALBERT—Yes. [*There is a pause.*]

AGI—Dr. Waldbrott used to say to me that he would die happy if he could be sure that I would continue his life's work. He has entrusted his two great theories . . . to me.

ALBERT—I beg your pardon, but how many great theories had he altogether?

AGI—Two.

ALBERT—And he entrusted them both to you?

AGI—Yes.

ALBERT—Good!

AGI—It is a very important, a very serious trust, your highness.

ALBERT—Certainly, certainly.

AGI—It carries a grave responsibility. . . . My teacher, my mother and my sister . . . it is only on their account that I prize my insignificant life . . . when it . . . [*looks at* ALEXANDRA] when it's in danger. [*Silence. He raises his glass.*] I drink to the welfare of the beautiful young princess. [*Drains the glass in a single gulp.* SYMPHOROSA *nudges* BEATRICE *repeatedly with her elbow.*]

ALBERT—Prosit! That was a mighty draught! [*Smiling, he nudges his neighbors.*]

HYACINTH—That was the draught of a novice. One doesn't drink heavy wine like this so quickly.

AGI—I didn't know, father. I never had the pleasure of drinking it before.

HYACINTH—Then let me introduce you with appropriate ceremony. This is Tokay, my boy, and of the very oldest.

BEATRICE—And it is drunk with dessert, and not with the soup.

HYACINTH—A two-fold error: you drank too soon and you drank too much.

AGI—I didn't know, father. I must own it was the first glass of wine I ever drank in my life.

HYACINTH—Not really?

AGI—Really, father. . . . There, you see, that, too, had to happen to-night. [ALEXANDRA *empties her own glass.*]

BEATRICE—Alexandra!

HYACINTH—[*Takes* ALEXANDRA's *glass.*] And I had just finished saying that one doesn't drink this wine so fast.

ALBERT—It's plain to see why Xara did it.

HYACINTH—Why?

ALBERT—To keep the professor in countenance.

BEATRICE—It was quite unnecessary. You never take any wine.

ALEXANDRA—I do to-night, mother. [*To* ALBERT.] Albert . . . see that this old professor gets some appointment. Waldbrott—that was his name, wasn't it?

HYACINTH—Waldbrott—yes.

ALBERT—If you wish it—I can write to Berlin. Please, Wunderlich, make a note of it.

WUNDERLICH—[*Writes in his notebook.*] I am making a note of it, your highness.

ALEXANDRA—What sort of appointment can one get for a man like that?

AGI—That's just it—none at all.

ALBERT—Surely the Emperor can do something for him.

AGI—Hardly, your highness. The man serves a greater lord.

ALBERT—A greater lord than the Emperor?

AGI—One much greater. [*Points upwards.*] He is an astronomer.

ALEXANDRA—I should like to meet your sister.

AGI—She is in Dresden, your highness.

ALEXANDRA—Do you love her very much?

AGI—Very much, your highness.

ALEXANDRA—A stupid question to ask, wasn't it?

BEATRICE—[*Uneasily.*] Yes, my child, it was.

AGI—No, your highness, it was a clever question because it is a pleasure to answer it. I love my sister with all my heart. In my darkest hours I think of her. For she has the indomitable faith that I cannot be crushed, that I am a world unto myself.

ALBERT—[*Somewhat ironically.*] A whole world?

AGI—Yes, your highness.

ALEXANDRA—How beautiful.

ALBERT—Isn't that a great deal?

AGI—[*Courageously.*] No, your highness. As an astronomer one learns that the tiniest speck is not to be despised. [*With significance.*] Those little specks in the sky . . . every single one . . . is a great world.

ALBERT—Every one?

AGI—[*More bravely.*] Every one!

ALBERT—[*A bit sharply.*] Perhaps they only think so, these little specks.

AGI—[*Still more bravely, though not loudly.*] Oh, I know it is difficult for the great lords to realize. They say: "Ten million inhabitants make an army of two millions." . . . Yet it is true that,

among all these millions, each individual is a world in himself, a world which may not be destroyed.

BEATRICE—[*Uneasily.*] But, Professor, who is trying to destroy any worlds?

AGI—Women, for example, do it with a smile. [*To* ALEXANDRA.] Your highness, why do you look at me so fixedly?

ALEXANDRA—I like what you are saying.

AGI—[*To* BEATRICE.] And your highness looks at me so uneasily. Perhaps you don't like what I'm saying.

BEATRICE—[*Coldly.*] That is not the tone in which you are accustomed to speak to me, Professor.

AGI—[*Bitterly.*] I am in very good humor tonight.

BEATRICE—Better than we care for, Professor.

ALEXANDRA—[*Soothingly.*] Mother, we are at a ball and are drinking champagne. . . . [*Raises her glass.*]

BEATRICE—I am astonished, Professor.

SYMPHOROSA—[*In alarm, suddenly.*] Albert, I commend the salmon to you. It is the pride of our chef.

ALBERT—I say, he does put it well. That's why Xara is so interested. What's that about the salmon? [*To* SYMPHOROSA.] Did you say something about the salmon?

SYMPHOROSA—It's the pride of our chef.

ALBERT—Oh, is it? . . . But what has that to do with it?

SYMPHOROSA—Nothing. I just mentioned it.

ALBERT—Oh! Yes! Well! Little specks in the sky. Astronomy. Romance. Empty phrases.

AGI—[*Heatedly.*] No, not empty phrases, your highness.

ALBERT—Oh, yes, they are. Phrases for women. To impress them. Every star a world in itself!

AGI—[*Belligerently.*] Not every star, your highness.

ALBERT—No?

AGI—No. The big white moon, for example, . . . it makes a huge, pretentious, glittering show, yet it has no light of its own. It only reflects the light of the sun. On the other hand, there is the modest little star called Vega, which you seem to hold in such contempt . . . its light is a thousand times stronger than the light of the sun. [SYMPHOROSA *nudges* BEATRICE.]

ALBERT—Its modesty is charming, under the circumstances.

AGI—[*Sharply.*] It isn't modesty, your highness. It is only remoteness.

ALBERT—It is fitting for remote things to glimmer modestly.

AGI—[*Openly truculent.*] It only seems so to your highness. To me, because I know what it is,

it shines in its true value; and so I proudly proclaim that it is more brilliant than the sun, and that its brilliance is its own. . . . [*Puts his hand on his chest.*] Its own!

ALBERT—[*Smiling.*] Possibly, Professor. It seems I do not understand these things.

AGI—[*Decidedly.*] No, your highness.

BEATRICE—[*To* SYMPHOROSA *in a harrowed whisper.*] I can't bear it any longer.

ALBERT—Charming! Charming! At last a man who tells me to my face that there is something I do not understand.

AGI—[*Stubbornly.*] No, your highness doesn't know anything about it.

ALBERT—[*Forcing himself to seem pleased.*] In twenty years I haven't heard anyone so outspoken. Professor, I admire you not only as an astronomer, but as a man. I am charmed with your candor.

AGI—[*As if offended.*] It makes no difference to me whether you like it or not.

ALBERT—[*Jovially.*] There's candor for you! Charming! I'm really enjoying myself here.

BEATRICE—[*Weakly.*] Oh! [*She rises suddenly, sways. General consternation.*]

ALBERT—[*Puts down his glass.*] What's the matter, Aunt Beatrice? [*He rises.*] Aunt Beatrice! Tu te trouves mal?

BEATRICE—[*Weakly.*] My head . . . all of a

sudden. . . . Laisse moi . . . je vous en prie—forgive me. . . . [WUNDERLICH *has gone to her assistance and is supporting her.*] Merci, mon colonel. . . . Never mind. . . . [*The* HUSSARS *swiftly draw the portières across both big arches.* WUNDERLICH *leaves* BEATRICE *and crosses to left.*]

ALBERT—Tu te trouves mal, Tante Béatrice?

BEATRICE—I am sorry . . . a little weakness . . . please don't bother . . . I'll retire.

WUNDERLICH—[*To* CÆSAR.] Have that music stopped. [CÆSAR *whispers to* ALFRED, *who hurries off. The music stops.*]

ALBERT—[*Takes* BEATRICE'S *arm.*] I don't doubt that you exerted yourself too much to-day. Let me see you to your room.

HYACINTH—Don't bother, Albert. I'll take her up.

ALBERT—No, no. Stay here . . . everybody. [*To* SYMPHOROSA, *who is about to accompany them.*] Symphorosa, you stay here with the salmon. Please sit down, Xara. No excitement. I'll look after her.

BEATRICE—[*In a faint voice.*] No excitement . . . with a houseful of strangers . . . oh . . . oh!

ALBERT—All right, my dear . . . everything will be all right. [*To the others.*] I wish you all to remain here, please. [*Goes toward left, supporting*

BEATRICE.] As if nothing had happened. [*As he passes* CÆSAR.] Why has the music stopped?

WUNDERLICH—[*Answers for* CÆSAR.] I thought your highness would prefer no music during this unfortunate——

ALBERT—[*Leading* BEATRICE *slowly off.*] Let the music continue. The more the better! [CÆSAR *makes a sign to* ALFRED, *who exits.*]

BEATRICE—Pardonnez moi . . . merci, mon cher. . . . [ALBERT *and* BEATRICE *exit.*]

WUNDERLICH—[*As he follows them.*] Music. [*He looks at* CÆSAR. *There is a brief pause, and the music begins again. Beaming with satisfaction,* WUNDERLICH *exits. All except* SYMPHOROSA *resume their seats.*]

AGI—Is your highness ill, too?

SYMPHOROSA—No.

AGI—Well, then——

SYMPHOROSA—I don't know what to do.

AGI—Why not follow their highnesses? And let the music continue. The more the better!

SYMPHOROSA—[*Crosses to left; looks at* ALEXANDRA.] What are you going to do? [ALEXANDRA *rises, undecided.*]

HYACINTH—Stay here. Your mother forbade you to leave.

SYMPHOROSA—[*To* HYACINTH.] And you?

HYACINTH—See here, my dear; I love Beatrice

very much, but she has been having these delicate attacks for thirty years. And I have seen too many of them to be alarmed. If they strike her standing, she sits down . . . and if they strike her sitting, she rises.

SYMPHOROSA—Karl!

HYACINTH—[*Earnestly.*] The situation here is much more serious. I warned you this afternoon.

SYMPHOROSA—What a misfortune! [*She exits at left.* CÆSAR *withdraws.* HYACINTH, AGI *and* ALEXANDRA *are left alone. There is a pause.* ALEXANDRA *sits on the tabouret, down right.*]

HYACINTH—[*Severely.*] Well, my son, you see what mischief you have done.

ALEXANDRA—[*Greatly agitated.*] It was my fault, Hyacinth. I am entirely to blame. That is why I stayed . . . to . . .

HYACINTH—Don't excite yourself, my child. Let us talk it over calmly. That is why I stayed. You have nothing to fear while I am here. [*To* AGI.] But you have.

AGI—[*Sits.*] No, father, I'm not afraid.

ALEXANDRA—It wasn't his fault. How deeply hurt he must have been, to do such a thing! I am so unhappy, Hyacinth! [*She buries her face in the robe of* HYACINTH, *who is standing beside her.*]

HYACINTH—Calm yourself, dear.

AGI—[*Rises; vehemently.*] I couldn't endure it

any longer, father, I couldn't. . . . God is my witness, I tried. But I am only human, father, and . . . in love . . . I hardly knew what I was saying. . . .

HYACINTH—Tell me, my son, are you angry with me, too?

AGI—How could I be, father?

HYACINTH—Then don't shout like that. I can hear you. And I understand you too, my son.

AGI—[*Grandiosely; excitedly.*] I am done for, but I shan't sell my life cheaply. Not even to this beautiful daughter of a king. Yesterday—no, this very afternoon, I would have given it for her handkerchief. But now that blood has been let, I hold it dearly.

HYACINTH—What you have done——

AGI—I am ready to face the consequences.

HYACINTH—I knew you would be, my son.

AGI—[*Very grandiosely.*] I am ready to answer for it: to anybody—to the family, to the prince, or to his adjutant with swords or any weapons they choose. But what I did I had to do. And there is more I have to do.

HYACINTH—More?

AGI—Yes, more.

HYACINTH—And this is our serious young scientist! [*To* ALEXANDRA.] Well, my girl, see what

we have come to. Here we are. [*Reproachfully.*] How do you like it?

ALEXANDRA—Come here.

HYACINTH—[*Goes to her.*] Well?

ALEXANDRA—Sit down here. [*He does so.*]

HYACINTH—Well?

ALEXANDRA—Now ask me again how I like it.

HYACINTH—How do you like it?

ALEXANDRA—[*On his shoulder, low.*] Hyacinth . . . I like it very much.

HYACINTH—[*Astonished.*] Upon my soul! The thing is worse than I thought. [*Moves nearer to her.*]

ALEXANDRA—[*Still on his shoulder.*] Hyacinth . . . dear Hyacinth . . . I . . . I . . .

HYACINTH—Well, my child? What is it? Out with it!

ALEXANDRA—Hyacinth . . . that glass of wine . . . it was the first I ever drank in my life, too.

HYACINTH—For a first drink it was a hearty one.

ALEXANDRA—[*With a glance at* AGI.] For his sake, Hyacinth. So that they wouldn't laugh at him.

HYACINTH—Fancy that! You amaze me. And how did it taste?

ALEXANDRA—[*Delighted.*] Made me . . . fuddled . . . and warm. . . . I wish I could die like

this . . . but first I want the professor to forgive me.

AGI—How *can* I forgive you?

HYACINTH—Silence! There, there, I forgive you for him, my dear. [ALEXANDRA *dries her tears.*] Have your cry out, and don't worry about it.

ALEXANDRA—That's not why I am crying, Hyacinth.

HYACINTH—Why, then?

ALEXANDRA—Because I . . . am sorry . . . for him.

AGI—You needn't be sorry for me.

HYACINTH—[*Mildly.*] You are not to speak now, my son.

ALEXANDRA—I have never been as sorry for anyone . . .

HYACINTH—And when he looks at you, you are sorrier for him than ever.

ALEXANDRA—[*Looks at* AGI.] When he looks at me, his eyes scorch my face . . . just as when you open the door of a stove——

HYACINTH—Yes, yes. The door of a stove. And what then?

ALEXANDRA—[*In child-like surprise.*] And then . . . then . . . his glance seems to enter my breast . . . and touch . . . my heart . . . just as you touch a key of the piano with one finger . . . very softly.

HYACINTH—A key of the piano. Yes, yes . . . and what else? . . .

ALEXANDRA—When he speaks . . . since I hurt him . . . when he speaks, his voice rings in my consciousness for a long time after. . . . Like a bell. And that hurts. I pity him so.

HYACINTH—[*Concerned.*] I see, my dear. Only I am afraid it is neither remorse nor pity.

ALEXANDRA—What then?

HYACINTH—A bit of internal disorder . . . the lungs . . . the heart. . . . [*Puts his ear to her chest.*] Take a deep breath. Now sigh. [ALEXANDRA *sighs.*] Say, "Professor."

ALEXANDRA—[*Looks at* AGI.] Professor. . . .

HYACINTH—[*Dryly.*] The heart.

ALEXANDRA—[*Sorrowfully, reproachfully.*] You are making fun of me, Hyacinth.

HYACINTH—Not at all, my child. The matter is very serious. Tell me, dear. When . . . did you begin . . . er . . . to pity him so?

ALEXANDRA—Before. Here in this room. . . . Quite suddenly. . . . He said something——

HYACINTH—What did he say?

ALEXANDRA—[*Looks at* AGI.] He will remember the word.

HYACINTH—What was it, my son?

AGI—I know, father. It was when I said that I, too, was a world in myself.

ALEXANDRA—No.

AGI—No? Well, then it was before that . . . when I spoke of the poetry of hopelessness.

ALEXANDRA—No.

HYACINTH—Well, what was it he said that touched you so?

ALEXANDRA—[*To* HYACINTH.] He said: "Lad."

HYACINTH—Lad? [*She nods.*] What did he say "lad" for?

ALEXANDRA—He said he wasn't a lad any more to believe in fairy tales.

HYACINTH—Oh, *that* was it?

ALEXANDRA—[*Smiles happily as if in a dream.*] You know . . . I had always known the word, but I had never heard it spoken before. We say "boy," don't we? . . . And he, poor fellow, said "lad," with such a quaint lilt to it . . . so sweetly . . . I knew at once it was what they used to call him at home . . . what his family calls him to this very day. . . . And . . . I don't know why . . . but suddenly it seemed as if I, too, had been there . . . in the village where they called him "lad" . . . I saw the tiny, spotless cottages with acacia trees around them . . . and his mother . . . and his sister . . . who called him "lad" . . . and loved him, and were proud of him. . . . That was why. [*There is a brief pause.*]

HYACINTH—Well, my boy—what do you say to that?

ALEXANDRA—Hyacinth, what did you call him?

HYACINTH—My lad . . . of course, that's what I meant.

ALEXANDRA—You dear! [*Embraces him delightedly.*]

HYACINTH—[*While she embraces him, to* AGI.] See that? I understand women.

AGI—[*Touched.*] She's beautiful . . . and good . . . I've forgiven her long ago.

ALEXANDRA—But I can't forgive myself. Never, never! [*With a start.*] What are we thinking? [*Suddenly.*] And poor mother . . . [*She is about to rise.*]

HYACINTH—Stay, my child, I wouldn't go up to her now. Compose yourself first, and then we shall go up together.

AGI—[*Crosses to the table.* Your mother was very cruel. [*Sits at the place where* HYACINTH *had been sitting.*]

ALEXANDRA—I'm sorry for that too. I'm sorry for everything now. And yet I'm so happy here. [*Embraces* HYACINTH.] And you are sweet . . . and good . . . and strong . . . and you understand one so well.

HYACINTH—The curious thing about you two is that I ought to be severe with you. . . . And I

shall be severe with you. The moment you showed signs of getting out of control your mother dropped the reins. And now I must take them in hand. [*Very gravely; rises.*] This affair must end here, my dear children. It can't go any further. I trust you both realize that. Fortunately, you are both too clever not to realize it. I am very sorry. Sorry for you too, my son. [*More severely, to* AGI.] Your conduct here to-day . . . Oh, you needn't be so depressed about it. How can I go on when you look at me like that? Now, see here. [*Begins over again.*] Your conduct to-day was—— [*His tone changes.*] I wish you wouldn't look at me so knowingly. It confuses me. You are just as bad as she is . . . [*to* ALEXANDRA] and you needn't look so pleased. You have no cause to. . . . This is unheard of! [*Walks a few paces.*] Unheard of! [*Comes to a standstill; bursts out angrily.*] You sit there. You don't say a word. You just look at me. And one can't say what one means. [*To* AGI, *beginning all over again.*] Your conduct to-night was . . . I must say—— [*Cannot look* AGI *in the eye.*] I must say . . . it was really . . . quite justifiable. There! I've said it. [*To* ALEXANDRA, *crossly.*] Why do you look at me so affectionately?

ALEXANDRA—[*Delighted.*] You are looking at me affectionately, Hyacinth.

HYACINTH—[*Crossly.*] That's the worst of it. Yes, that's the worst of it. When I look at you, I . . . when I look at you . . . like this. . . . Unheard of! I look at you . . . and my heart aches for you. . . . But you . . . you children . . . you are young . . . unspoiled . . . and I . . . no, I wasn't born to be a judge. I try to be . . . but I try in vain. I can't . . . judge you. There you sit . . . two fine young people . . . and in such a desperate plight . . . but so happy in spite of it . . . you will never be as happy again. Happiness flies past like the wind. You have scarcely felt it before it is gone. . . . And then comes the reality, to which you will awake to-morrow morning . . . which will separate you, and which will be for the best. . . . But it will hurt a little, my dear children. It will hurt . . . such things have happened before. . . . Even to me . . . when I wore a uniform. A long, long time ago. [*He turns away. There is a pause. He goes to the table, picks up his glass. Softly.*] To your happiness. [*Raises the glass, sips the wine, sits at the place which* AGI *had occupied during supper. There is a pause during which* ALEXANDRA and AGI *sit motionless.* CÆSAR *enters quietly.*]

HYACINTH—What is it, my friend?

CÆSAR—[*Quietly.*] Her highness requests the reverend father to go and see her.

HYACINTH—At once?

CÆSAR—Her highness used the word: "Immediately."

HYACINTH—She would send for me now, just as I am beginning to enjoy my supper!

CÆSAR—[*In consternation.*] Didn't the reverend father like the soup?

HYACINTH—Soup? [*Rises.*] Bitter, hot tea is what you gave me.

CÆSAR—Oh! Oh! Your reverence! What an error! Oh, I could kill myself.

HYACINTH—I forbid you to kill yourself, though I'm sure you had no such intention. And I'd forbid you to scold the unfortunate waiter who made the error, if I didn't know you'd do it anyhow. I'll be back directly, children.

ALEXANDRA—[*Rises.*] But Hyacinth! We can't stay here alone. Hadn't I better go with you?

CÆSAR—Her highness, the Princess Symphorosa, asked her highness, your mother, whether she wanted to see your highness.

ALEXANDRA—What did she say?

CÆSAR—Her highness . . . so to speak . . . expressed herself . . . to the effect that——

ALEXANDRA—What did she say?

CÆSAR—Her highness said: "Let her keep out of my sight." [*There is a pause.* CÆSAR *steps back and whispers to* ALFRED.]

HYACINTH—You see, my child! Just stay where

you are while I speak to your mother. You needn't envy me the task. Then I shall come back and fetch you. [*He exits at left.* ALFRED *exits. There is a pause.*]

ALEXANDRA—[*After the pause, during which she has repeatedly looked at* AGI.] Please . . . I don't even know your first name. What is it?

AGI—Hans.

ALEXANDRA—How old are you?

AGI—Twenty-nine.

ALEXANDRA—Where were you born?

AGI—In Transylvania.

ALEXANDRA—What district?

AGI—[*In surprise.*] Your highness . . . at last we are left alone . . . and you ask me questions like a census taker.

ALEXANDRA—[*Embarrassed; helplessly.*] I want to know you. I want to hear all about you as quickly as possible. [*Almost in tears.*] But I don't know how to go about it.

AGI—Have you thought of to-morrow morning?

ALEXANDRA—I don't want to think about that yet. The few moments we have together now . . . mustn't be spoiled . . . for you or for me——

AGI—To-morrow they'll sweep me out like rubbish.

ALEXANDRA—And what if I don't let them, Hans?

AGI—Just the same, I shall go. Just the same.

ALEXANDRA—[*Notices* CÆSAR.] What are you waiting for?

CÆSAR—For your orders, your highness.

ALEXANDRA—[*Comes toward him.*] There is nothing. You may go.

CÆSAR—Yes, your highness. [*But he does not move.*]

ALEXANDRA—You may go.

CÆSAR—Leave the room, your highness?

ALEXANDRA—At once, Cæsar.

CÆSAR—Your highness.

ALEXANDRA—Yes?

CÆSAR—It appears that I myself served Father Hyacinth the tea instead of soup. But then so many extraordinary things have happened to-night, it is no wonder——

ALEXANDRA—You may go, Cæsar.

CÆSAR—Yes, your highness. I am certain the world is coming to an end, your highness. [*He sobs and exits weeping at left.* AGI *goes to door through which* CÆSAR *made his exit, and remains standing there, looking at* ALEXANDRA. *There is a pause.*]

AGI—[*After a glance into the ballroom.*] The ballroom is empty. The guests are leaving. [*Speaks softly with passionate warmth.*] And now we are quite alone, princess. Perhaps only for a few

minutes . . . and then all that was beautiful in my life . . . will be gone.

ALEXANDRA—[*Trembling.*] I have never before . . . been alone with a man.

AGI—[*Comes toward her.*] Are you afraid of me?

ALEXANDRA—I don't know. But if it's fear . . . then I want always to be afraid.

AGI—The last time . . . perhaps the last moment I shall see you. Do you love me?

ALEXANDRA—[*Almost stammering; like a child.*] If it's love . . . then . . . it's just the same as . . . when I was a little girl . . . and the Emperor came. [*He regards her in astonishment.*] Yes . . . I had seen many portraits of the Emperor . . . with a golden crown on his head . . . in all his glitter and glory . . . and then once, when he visited us, in civilian clothes—— [*Regretfully.*] I didn't recognize him.

AGI—My beautiful princess! [*Comes nearer to her.*]

ALEXANDRA—[*Trembling.*] Don't come too near, Hans.

AGI—Are you so afraid of me? [*Takes her hand.*]

ALEXANDRA—[*Draws back.*] I don't like . . . you to touch me. . . . How cold your hand is!

AGI—No. It's yours that's hot. What are you

thinking that makes your hand tremble in mine?

ALEXANDRA—Of something reckless, and——

AGI—And of what?

ALEXANDRA—And of my rank, Hans. [*There is a pause.* ALEXANDRA *glances toward the table.*] Won't you have something to eat?

AGI—No.

ALEXANDRA—Why won't you eat?

AGI—I am not hungry. [*Turns to her ardently.*] I'm thirsty.

ALEXANDRA—[*Trembling.*] Will you drink something?

AGI—No. I am thirsty for you, for your mouth and your eyes . . . and your voice . . .

ALEXANDRA—[*Terrified.*] You mustn't look at me like that!

AGI—[*Passionately.*] When I look into your eyes . . . deep into your eyes . . . we seem to be mounting together on the crest of a flame——

ALEXANDRA—[*In alarm.*] What do you mean?

AGI—Upward . . . ever upward . . . higher . . . along the path . . .

ALEXANDRA—[*Alarmed, child-like.*] What path are you talking about?

AGI—[*Coming nearer to her.*] The path you pointed out to me. . . . Before, I lacked the courage to realize . . . that I am the rival of a king. But now I know it. And now I know I have won. Be-

fore, I only stammered, but now, now I want to sing . . . because I have triumphed, triumphed over every obstacle. . . . And now——

ALEXANDRA—[*Stares at him in terror.*] And now?

AGI—I know that to-morrow my triumph will be over. [*Takes her hands.*] But to-night, your highness, we shall see who is king, he or I!

ALEXANDRA—[*Faint with terror.*] You frighten me!

AGI—My silence should have frightened you more.

ALEXANDRA—[*Terrified.*] Now . . . you want to take your revenge . . .

AGI—I love you.

ALEXANDRA—[*Looks terror-stricken into his eyes.*] How you hate me now——

AGI—And I won't have you pity me! Soon they will all come back. Another minute and I'll be a servant again. A dismissed servant! Must it end like that? Can't I even make you arrogant again? Can't I make you insult me . . . so that in my rage I may take you in my arms and carry you off . . . out into the night . . . among your roses . . . and kiss that haughty mouth . . . [*He is about to embrace her.*]

ALEXANDRA—[*Terrified, but resisting him affectionately rather than resentfully.*] Hans! Hans!

[*There is a noise off left. They separate slowly.*] [*There is a pause.* Cæsar *enters at left, leaving the double doors open behind him.*]

Alexandra—[*Goes slowly towards him.*] What do you want?

Cæsar—His highness, the Crown Prince, is preparing to retire. He has received a telegram. His mother, the Royal Princess Maria Dominica, is coming to-morrow morning.

Alexandra—His mother? Coming here?

Cæsar—Yes, your highness! [*There is a long pause.*]

Cæsar—I take the liberty to report that his highness, the Crown Prince, will shortly pass through this room.

Alexandra—[*Nervously.*] Hyacinth isn't back yet . . . and we are here . . . like this . . . we two . . .

Cæsar—If your highness should desire to go through the yellow room . . . there is still time. [*He indicates the doors back left.*]

Alexandra—[*Proudly.*] How dare you, Cæsar? Are you drunk?

Cæsar—[*Tragically.*] No, your highness, I beg pardon, I'm sure. I've only gone out of my mind.

Alexandra—That will do, Cæsar. [*He bows and crosses to left. There is a pause. Through the door at left come two lackeys bearing lighted*

candelabra. Behind them come ALBERT, WUNDERLICH *and* LUETZEN. *The procession passes slowly across the stage. When* ALBERT *comes abreast of the table he stops, smiling. The two lackeys with the candelabra reach the door at right, open it and take their places on either side.* WUNDERLICH *and* LUETZEN *pause on the threshold.*]

ALBERT—[*Unaffectedly pleasant.*] My dear Xara, how fortunate still to find you here and bid you good night. [*Extends his hand.*] I was to have gone to-morrow. But now I am happy to tell you that my mother arrives in the morning. Or did you know it?

ALEXANDRA—They told me, Albert. I am very glad.

ALBERT—She is extremely fond of you.

ALEXANDRA—I am fond of her too, Albert, very.

ALBERT—Your mother has gone to bed. But she feels much better. She did a bit too much to-day. I warned her not to. But she is such a charming hostess, she wouldn't heed my advice. [HYACINTH *enters at left, followed, a few moments later, by* SYMPHOROSA. HYACINTH *comes slowly into the room.* SYMPHOROSA *lingers in the doorway.*]

ALEXANDRA—Mother is never happier than when she is making her guests comfortable.

ALBERT—But one shouldn't overdo it. I have

really reproached myself on her account. My mother will scold me for it too. But, happily, it's nothing serious. Good night, Xara. [*Extends his hand to her.* ALEXANDRA *courtesies low.*]

ALBERT—[*As if he had just noticed* AGI.] Ah, the professor! Good night, Professor. Your discourse was very interesting . . . particularly the manner of delivery. . . . Very original, yes . . . a bit belligerent, but original. As her highness was taken ill so suddenly, I hadn't the opportunity to offer my very humble comment. I would never have supposed that you could be such an insubordinate young fool.

ALEXANDRA—[*Uneasily, forcing a smile.*] Albert, you are mistaken——

ALBERT—No, no, these astronomical impertinences are very interesting. [*To* HYACINTH.] He sat down with us quite unassumingly and then with a flourish he lifted us up to the sky . . . and he stayed up there . . . and dropped me with a thud. . . . [*To* AGI.] But you spoke with spirit. Very smart. . . . Always higher, higher——

ALEXANDRA—Pardon me, but your sarcastic criticism is unjust, Albert. He is not like us.

ALBERT—I noticed that.

ALEXANDRA—[*More and more excitedly.*] He is a scientist; he is a free spirit. . . . He has the right to speak more freely than we . . .

ALBERT—You defend his bad manners just as graciously as you suffered them a while ago. You are a brave and clever girl—a perfect martyr. I have just learned from your mother that you . . . [*sarcastically*] were the innocent target of certain unwelcome attentions . . . and that you have endured them with such patience, such goodness . . .

ALEXANDRA—[*Very agitated; looks from* ALBERT *to* AGI *in fear that they will quarrel.*] Mother is mistaken, Albert. And you judge him wrongly. You don't understand him.

ALBERT—[*Ironically.*] It is not easy to understand him.

ALEXANDRA—[*Excitedly.*] You can't possibly understand him. [ALBERT *laughs mockingly.*] Don't laugh at him, Albert. He is a scientist and a poet. . . . He is an astronomer.

ALBERT—An ill-bred little astronomer.

AGI—[*With a threatening movement.*] Your highness!

ALEXANDRA—[*Trembling with excitement; passionately.*] Albert, you are going too far. You must not say that.

ALBERT—But he is.

ALEXANDRA—I won't have him insulted . . . like this——

AGI—[*To* ALBERT.] Your highness, I——

ALBERT—[*Quite composed.*] You are an imper-

tinent little upstart. [*With a little shriek of dismay* ALEXANDRA *throws herself in front of* AGI. *She is highly excited.*] Don't answer him, Hans. [*Looks at him.*] I forbid it. [*Raises her voice.*] Hans! [*For a moment she hesitates, looks at* ALBERT, *then throws herself on* AGI, *embraces him passionately, kisses him and rests a moment against his chest. On the thresholds of the four doors the people stand as follows: At left,* SYMPHOROSA; *at right, two lackeys with candles, and* LUETZEN; *back right,* WUNDERLICH *alone. At the moment of the kiss they all withdraw slowly.* HYACINTH *does not go. He only takes a few steps backwards.* ALEXANDRA *releases* AGI, *stands a moment stiff and staring, then leans half fainting against the edge of the table.*]

ALBERT—[*Lightly, softly, ironically.*] Oh! That's different. Quite different. In that case . . . I beg your pardon, Professor. [*Makes a military bow to* ALEXANDRA *and* AGI.] Good night. [*He exits at right. There is a pause.* SYMPHOROSA *enters at left and leads the half swooning* ALEXANDRA *gently, tenderly off back left. When they both have gone,* HYACINTH *approaches* AGI *gravely, almost threateningly, stops in front of him and kisses him suddenly. Smiling graciously,* HYACINTH *hurries off at left.* AGI *stares after him.*]

THE CURTAIN FALLS

ACT THREE

ACT THREE

Early morning of the following day. A salon of the guest suite assigned to MARIA DOMINICA. *Doors at right and left. At back, on the left, is the entrance from the hallway. When the curtain rises* SYMPHOROSA *is speaking to the* CHAMBERMAID.

SYMPHOROSA—We do not know how soon her highness Maria Dominica may arrive. Her telegram said this morning, but there is no train in the morning, so she must be coming by motor. That means we may look for her at any moment.

CHAMBERMAID—Yes, your highness. [BEATRICE *enters at left.*]

SYMPHOROSA—[*Hurries to her and embraces her.*] Darling . . . why are you up so early? It's barely seven o'clock. There, there! . . . Do you feel better?

BEATRICE—[*Unhappily.*] I haven't slept. I never closed an eye, I was so restless. . . . Is the guest suite ready?

CHAMBERMAID—Everything is in perfect order.

BEATRICE—[*Tearfully.*] The bath?

CHAMBERMAID—We have just lit the fire. The water will be warm in half an hour. [*At a nod from* BEATRICE *she exits at right.*]

BEATRICE—Is she to have these three rooms?

SYMPHOROSA—Yes. This salon—— [*Points to the right*] and that one; the bedroom with the dressing room; and the bath. [BEATRICE *dries her eyes.*]

SYMPHOROSA—Don't cry, dear. The good Lord will help us.

BEATRICE—Only He *can* help us now. When does Dominica arrive?

SYMPHOROSA—Can't tell exactly. She is coming by motor.

BEATRICE—If she had only come yesterday—even yesterday evening——

SYMPHOROSA—[*Sighs.*] Ah, yes . . .

BEATRICE—This beautiful summer day! And to think that it is the most tragic day of my life! Could you ever have believed that Maria Dominica would be on her way to ask my daughter's hand in marriage with her son . . . and I awaiting her in tears? [*Weeps.*]

SYMPHOROSA—My dear! [*Embraces her.*]

BEATRICE—How *is* Albert?

SYMPHOROSA—He is asleep.

BEATRICE—Fortunate man! And Alexandra?

SYMPHOROSA—She came down at six, and went

riding. Alone. I hear you talked with her last night.

BEATRICE—Yes. She came to my bedside at three o'clock. Oh, that I had been spared that interview!

SYMPHOROSA—Was she disrespectful?

BEATRICE—No, she was repentant. She told me everything—everything that happened.

SYMPHOROSA—The very last thing too?

BEATRICE—If only she hadn't told me that!

SYMPHOROSA—What did you say to her?

BEATRICE—Not a word. I wasn't able to. My whole body turned to ice.

SYMPHOROSA—What did she do?

BEATRICE—Kissed my hand and went out. I haven't seen her since. [*A brief pause.*] That man—is he still here?

SYMPHOROSA—He is here—but——

BEATRICE—[*Explosively.*] He is here?

SYMPHOROSA—Yes, but——

BEATRICE—There is no *but* which can justify his being here still.

SYMPHOROSA—. . . But he is packing his trunk.

BEATRICE—[*To the* CHAMBERMAID *who has entered at right.*] Well?

CHAMBERMAID—Your highness, a motor is entering the grounds. You can see it from the window. There are two ladies in it.

BEATRICE—Now my Calvary begins. Symphorosa—don't leave me. Where is Hyacinth?

SYMPHOROSA—Gone out for a walk.

BEATRICE—I don't want to see him. Last night I sent for him to give him a scolding.

SYMPHOROSA—Yes?

BEATRICE—And he scolded me instead. Let him keep out of my sight.

SYMPHOROSA—Why are you so angry with him?

BEATRICE—Because he was right.

CÆSAR—[*Enters at left.*] Your highness, the motor has driven up.

BEATRICE—We're coming, we're coming. [*She exits quickly with* SYMPHOROSA. CÆSAR *exits at back. The door remains open. Off stage their voices are heard in an exchange of greetings.* DOMINICA *enters with* BEATRICE *and* SYMPHOROSA. *She wears a motoring coat. Behind her comes the* COUNTESS, *who helps her off with the coat, hat and veil and gives them to the* CHAMBERMAID, *who exits at right, taking the things with her.*]

DOMINICA—[*Animatedly continuing the conversation begun outside.*] . . . . simply by starting at four this morning, my dear. I'm not fond of travelling by day in the summertime. I can't endure the heat. The car ran beautifully. Barely three hours. And the distance is over two hundred kilometers.

BEATRICE—Well, what time did you rise?

DOMINICA—At half-past two. While you were still dancing here. [BEATRICE *sighs.*]

SYMPHOROSA—What an energetic woman you are, Dominica! How youthful!

DOMINICA—[*With spiritual fervor.*] There is nothing I can't be . . . for my son. [BEATRICE *sighs.*] That's the second time you have sighed.

BEATRICE—I was thinking of my poor dear husband. How fond he was of you.

DOMINICA—I was fond of him too . . . very.

BEATRICE—Symphorosa, will you go and see that everything is ready? We hadn't expected you so early.

DOMINICA—I didn't telegraph the hour of my arrival because you never can be sure when you are motoring. But I don't mind waiting. [*Sits.*] What a joy it is to sit down again without having a landscape rushing past you!

SYMPHOROSA—Excuse me, dear, while I see that everything has been made comfortable for you. [*She exits at right.*]

BEATRICE—Will you have breakfast now?

DOMINICA—Later, thank you. We had some tea before we started. If you please, Countess, tell Luetzen he is not to awaken my son on my account, not before his accustomed hour. [*The* COUNTESS

exits at right.] I hear you were up late last night, dissipating with Albert. He likes that.

BEATRICE—Oh . . . he is so gracious . . . so easy to entertain . . .

DOMINICA—Don't be modest. I daresay you contrived all sorts of schemes to amuse and entertain him.

BEATRICE—[*Bitterly.*] We did our best, of course.

DOMINICA—And now, my dear, let us come to the point. I am a simple, practical woman, you know. They haven't nicknamed me "the cook" in Vienna for nothing.

BEATRICE—Oh!

DOMINICA—Tut, tut! I know that's what they call me, and I am proud of it. But, first of all, give me a nice kiss. [*They stand up and kiss.*] That's right! [*They sit.*] And now to business. You realize why I am here.

BEATRICE—Oh, Dominica!

DOMINICA—In a word: My son wishes to marry your daughter. [*They rise again, kiss, and sit down.* BEATRICE *weeps.*]

DOMINICA—Don't cry, Beatrice. This is nothing to cry about.

BEATRICE—No, certainly not . . . but I am so overwhelmed.

DOMINICA—Compose yourself, dear. Albert tele-

graphed me yesterday that he didn't trust himself to speak to you about Alexandra without me. You know he never makes a step without me.

BEATRICE—A good, dutiful son.

DOMINICA—Yes, so he is. [*Majestically.*] Happy the people who get such a king. . . . But there! He asked me to come at once so that he might tell her how enchanted he is with her. [*Both rise, embrace and kiss each other, then sit down.*]

BEATRICE—Oh, my dear Dominica!

DOMINICA—I don't wonder. She is such a perfect creature,—beautiful, good, clever and queenly. That is what I admire most about her—her proud, imperious ways.

BEATRICE—How nice of you to say so!

DOMINICA—Haven't you noticed that in the past ten years our young women have become infected with a certain rather vulgar freedom of manner, imported from foreign countries? Not she. She is grave, majestic, aloof, perhaps a bit too aloof . . . I mean a bit too cold toward her inferiors.

BEATRICE—Cold? Oh, I wouldn't say that.

DOMINICA—That is precisely what I admire in her.

BEATRICE—She has altered of late. She is quite warm to her inferiors now.

DOMINICA—To think that the desire of my

sainted husband is at last to be fulfilled! This marriage, you know, was his——

BEATRICE—His most cherished wish. [*Sighs.*]

DOMINICA—I am very happy, Beatrice, that the obstacles which lay in the way of this marriage are vanished. Now Albert can follow the call of his heart. [*She sighs deeply.*]

BEATRICE—Now it's you who sighed.

DOMINICA—I don't deny it, Beatrice. It is no great credit to our diplomats that my son must marry for love. It grieves me to think that the incompetence of our diplomats should compel my son to follow the call of his heart.

BEATRICE—Perhaps he'll be happier for it.

DOMINICA—If we had had a Metternich, Albert might have been very unhappy, but then there would have been a real marriage. Don't be angry at my candor. . . . One's Family, you know! . . . We are not what we are—to strive for *personal* happiness.

BEATRICE—Alas, no.

DOMINICA—If you knew what Albert has gone through. First that Russian girl, Olga Constantinovna . . .

BEATRICE—Oh, I know. And then the English girl, Patricia.

DOMINICA—You know that, too?

BEATRICE—I have followed his political career

with the utmost interest. And then, in Dresden, came Leopoldine Charlotte . . . the fat one.

DOMINICA—How well you know everything! From there he went to Portugal.

BEATRICE—In the middle of July . . . Silvina Gonzaga, that odious infanta.

DOMINICA—Odious? That doesn't describe her. Perhaps there is a word for it in Portuguese. In any case "odious" is quite inadequate. And then came that amazing affair with Marie Hermine in Brussels.

BEATRICE—She is fully two heads taller than Albert.

DOMINICA—Yes. But we never knew it because she had always sent us bust portraits.

BEATRICE—Yes, I know.

DOMINICA—How perfectly charming of you to *know* everything!

BEATRICE—Oh, well, you see, I have regarded Albert as one of the family ever since he was a child. [HYACINTH *enters at back.*]

HYACINTH—Welcome, Dominica. [*Embraces her.*]

DOMINICA—Karl!

HYACINTH—[*Crosses to* BEATRICE, *kisses her on the forehead.*] Good morning, Beatrice. You are looking splendid, Dominica.

DOMINICA—You, of all people! Are you here for a holiday?

HYACINTH—Only for a few days. But perhaps I am interrupting your——

DOMINICA—Not at all. Well, here I am, and you know why I am here.

HYACINTH—And I am delighted. [*Takes her hand; kisses it.*]

DOMINICA—We were just talking of how my poor son had been tossed about by the exigencies of politics before he arrived at last in the calm, happy harbor of your dear family. Olga Constantinovna——

HYACINTH—Of the blue eyes. A magnificent girl.

DOMINICA—Do you know her?

HYACINTH—I danced with her mother in Munich.

DOMINICA—Odd to hear you say that.

HYACINTH—Oh, in those days——

DOMINICA—She really was a beautiful girl. But politics, you know. And when King Edward left Marienbad that ended all hope of an alliance with England. Whereupon the English princess began studying the Bulgarian language. With an eye to the Bulgarian crown prince.

HYACINTH—What did Albert do?

DOMINICA—We sent him on a trip into Africa to heal his broken heart.

BEATRICE—And Patricia learned to speak Bulgarian.

DOMINICA—Fluently. But nothing came of that either. She was married in Sweden to Prince Olaf. Now, with all her Bulgarian erudition, she lives among the Swedes. I hear that the Bulgarian minister to Stockholm is delirious with joy because she always speaks Bulgarian with him. And out of that, between Sweden and Bulgaria . . . came an enormous trade in pig iron. To this day the good Bulgarians do not dream to what they owe all that iron.

BEATRICE—And don't you know why nothing came of the Bulgarian marriage?

DOMINICA—I understand that the Serbs thwarted Delcassé's schemes.

BEATRICE—That is the official explanation. The real reason is more interesting. Patricia's family sent Arthur and the Bulgarian court sent Philip for a final conference. As you know, Arthur can't hear a thing with his left ear, and Philip is totally deaf in his right ear. At the court dinner, where the conference was to take place, they were seated side by side, in the order that rank and etiquette demanded, so that each had his deaf ear turned to the other. But neither of them realized it. In the beginning each spoke a few words, but receiving no answer, became offended and said no more. Both

of them went home in a rage and that is how Patricia came to be a Swedish princess, and why there is so much pig iron in Bulgaria to-day.

HYACINTH—I never heard that story before. And so, Dominica, you are taking our little girl away from us.

DOMINICA—Yes, Karl. Is she still asleep?

BEATRICE—No. She went riding early this morning.

DOMINICA—When can I see her?

BEATRICE—[*In a panic.*] When can you see her? . . . Ah-h-h . . . God! [*She is greatly distressed; presses her hand to her forehead.*] My head . . . Oh! [*Sways weakly.*]

HYACINTH—[*Forcibly.*] My dear, I beg of you, I sincerely urge you not to be ill; I forbid you to be ill.

DOMINICA—What's the matter with you, dear?

BEATRICE—It started last night . . . at supper . . . a sudden weak spell. . . .

HYACINTH—It was very inconsiderate of you.

BEATRICE—But Karl——

DOMINICA—If you really don't feel well——

HYACINTH—What if she *doesn't* feel well? I don't feel so well myself just now. I forbid you to faint. . . . Sit down. [*With an expression of dread,* BEATRICE *sits.*]

DOMINICA—[*Goes to her in alarm.*] But what is the matter?

HYACINTH—[*Restraining her.*] I shall tell you, Dominica.

BEATRICE—[*Terrified; quavering.*] Karl! Karl!

HYACINTH—Peace! Let me speak now. Dominica, you are regarded—and not without reason—as the cleverest woman in Europe.

DOMINICA—But Karl!

HYACINTH—Now don't be modest. You'll be needing all your cleverness in a moment. For we have a bit of a difficulty here. I don't consider it so, but Beatrice, apprehensive as usual, does. . . . Something has happened, Dominica.

DOMINICA—Jesus and Mary! Not to Alexandra?

HYACINTH—There! Didn't I say she was the cleverest woman in——

DOMINICA—Something has happened . . . to Alexandra?

HYACINTH—No, but almost.

BEATRICE—[*Terrified.*] Karl!

DOMINICA—Good heavens!

HYACINTH—I implore you, don't you faint too.

DOMINICA—Karl! You terrify me.

HYACINTH—On the contrary. I am reassuring you.

DOMINICA—What happened, in heaven's name?

HYACINTH—Simply this—that since Albert came here he has conducted himself like a fish.

DOMINICA—Like a fish? [DOMINICA *is sitting at left,* BEATRICE *at right and* HYACINTH *stands between them.*]

BEATRICE—How can you say such a thing?

HYACINTH—It is true. He was cold and mute.

DOMINICA—Poor Albert! That was on my account. He wanted me to be here before he——

HYACINTH—No one in the world could have suspected that. Least of all Alexandra, who was quite attracted by him and who was deeply wounded by his indifference.

DOMINICA—Did he make it as conspicuous as that?

HYACINTH—It couldn't possibly have been more conspicuous. He is a very good son, but a very bad marriage candidate. Just the same, your son is idolized here. Both by the girl and by her good mother. [*His gesture indicates* BEATRICE.]

DOMINICA—You dear, sweet——

BEATRICE—Oh, Dominica, if you only knew . . . if you only knew——

HYACINTH—And amid all this adoration he strutted like a . . . like a . . .

DOMINICA—Fish.

HYACINTH—Worse than that! The girl didn't sleep . . . wept all night long . . .

DOMINICA—How terrible!

HYACINTH—And we all suffered with her . . . her mother, I, the boys, the professor.

DOMINICA—[*Suspiciously.*] What professor?

HYACINTH—[*Mopping his brow.*] That's just it. [*With a glance at* BEATRICE.] There is a teacher here, a tutor to the boys. A nice, cultured straightforward young man. And he . . . well . . . toward the end . . . when everyone was desperate . . . an extraordinary thing occurred, which was, indeed, only another proof of the adoration in which your son——

BEATRICE—[*Terrified; beseechingly.*] Karl!

DOMINICA—Go on.

HYACINTH—With characteristic feminine logic it was deemed expedient to invite the professor to last night's reception . . . in order to stimulate Albert's interest a bit. A stupid idea, of course . . . but from it you can glean the somewhat ecstatic regard in which your son is held here.

DOMINICA—What a charming, naïve idea!

HYACINTH—Wasn't it? [*Flashes* BEATRICE *a triumphant glance.*] Yes, and then came something which hadn't been reckoned with. This professor—a fine, a serious, a most estimable young man—it appeared that he—think of it—that he had been secretly in love with Alexandra. [*In terror* BEATRICE *rises. There is a brief pause.*]

DOMINICA—[*Emphatically.*] Such things happen. [*Reassured,* BEATRICE *sits down.*]

HYACINTH—[*With a triumphant glance at* BEATRICE.] Yes, and no wonder. He sees her every day. She is beautiful. The rest was inevitable. Think of all those ancient romances of the Tutor and the Princess——

DOMINICA—What then?

HYACINTH—Put yourself in this poor young man's place. Though desperately in love, he lends himself to this innocent deception, knowing, poor fellow, that he is only a means to an end.

DOMINICA—It was all Albert's fault. Why did he hesitate to speak? I consider his reticence exaggerated under the circumstances.

HYACINTH—Remember it was out of consideration for you. Really, Albert's devotion to you borders on the fantastic.

DOMINICA—After all, it *is* gratifying. [*With tears in her eyes.*] Well, and then?

HYACINTH—[*Mopping his brow.*] Well, as I said, this young man sat down to supper with me . . . this martyr . . . I really must call him that . . . this wretched human sacrifice . . . and there at the table he endured such tortures that tears came to my eyes, watching him.

DOMINICA—I don't wonder. It is really quite touching.

HYACINTH—And the poor girl, who is tender-hearted as she can be, could not bear to see him suffer so . . . and she would have sent him away . . . but the professor . . . solely for the sake of the family . . . solely for Alexandra's sake . . . solely for the sake of your son's happiness . . . the professor played the comedy through, though his heart was bleeding. . . .

DOMINICA—Poor fellow. . . .

HYACINTH—. . . Until Albert, who knew nothing of all this, insulted him.

DOMINICA—[*Horrified.*] The professor?

HYACINTH—Yes, him.

DOMINICA—This poor young man?

HYACINTH—This poor young man. Think of it!

DOMINICA—What did Albert do?

HYACINTH—He called him an impertinent little upstart.

DOMINICA—Terrible! And didn't you interfere?

HYACINTH—How could I?

DOMINICA—What did the young man do?

HYACINTH—What could he do? He bowed his head. I thought my heart would break.

DOMINICA—Poor, brave fellow! And what did Alexandra say?

HYACINTH—[*Mopping his brow.*] I am glad that you, too, are sorry for this nice young man.

DOMINICA—What did Alexandra do?

HYACINTH—You are not only clever but sympathetic as well.

DOMINICA—And Alexandra?

HYACINTH—If you could only have seen him standing there, this poor, industrious scientist. . . . Would you believe it? An astronomer! With his hopeless, despairing, inarticulate love; with his shattered romance; with his bleeding heart . . . and Albert insulting him with cold, withering elegance. . . . And there he stood with bowed head . . . disgraced irreparably . . . annihilated . . . after he had made such a sacrifice for the family. . . . Can you picture it? Such loyalty—and such a martyrdom? *You* tell me, as a woman, is such a young man not noble?

DOMINICA—[*Emphatically.*] Most noble!

HYACINTH—[*Rhetorically.*] Is he the sort of young man who should be driven out? Is he the sort who should be despised?

DOMINICA—Certainly not.

HYACINTH—[*With increasing fervor.*] Is he the sort who should be insulted? Who should be mistreated? Who should be punished?

DOMINICA—God forbid.

HYACINTH—[*Still more impassioned.*] Again I ask you: Does such a young man deserve to be driven away? To be insulted? To be mistreated? Or does he deserve . . . to . . . what shall I say?

. . . to . . . I don't know myself . . . he deserves . . . to . . . to——

DOMINICA—To be kissed!

HYACINTH—Yes, that is just what happened to him. [*Sinks weakly into a chair; mops his brow; murmurs to himself.*] I thought she'd never say it.

DOMINICA—[*Taken aback.*] Eh? . . . What happened to him?

HYACINTH—Just what you said. Alexandra kissed him.

DOMINICA—Alexandra?

HYACINTH—As you said.

DOMINICA—I? Yes. Um, yes.

HYACINTH—After Albert insulted him she couldn't stand by and see him suffer any longer. She kissed him, in mine and Albert's presence.

DOMINICA—And what did Albert do?

HYACINTH—How could he, poor chap, understand what was going on? Naturally, he didn't see it all as clearly as you see it now.

DOMINICA—[*Without conviction.*] I? Yes . . . yes . . . of course.

HYACINTH—And Beatrice . . . who is such a stickler for form . . . sits here worrying herself almost to death [*turns to* BEATRICE] about something which Dominica, as you see, finds perfectly natural, yes, almost inevitable. Isn't it so?

DOMINICA—[*Without conviction.*] Certainly, certainly.

HYACINTH—It was a charming gesture on Alexandra's part. I am truly proud that throughout the entire episode she conducted herself just as you yourself would have done. We may all be proud of her. [*As he speaks* BEATRICE *gives him furtive, grateful glances.*]

DOMINICA—A splendid girl. A girl of spirit! [*Majestically.*] Happy the people who get such a queen.

HYACINTH—. . . And if you want to know—I kissed the poor fellow myself.

DOMINICA—You were right. Louis XVI., after his wife's recovery from a dangerous confinement, kissed a nurse. [*Emphatically.*] Such things happen. [*After a brief pause.*] So that was the terrible thing?

HYACINTH—Yes, that was it. [*Points to* BEATRICE.] She fainted dead away. But she . . . she was angry with the professor anyhow.

BEATRICE—[*Quite reassured now.*] I? I look upon it in the same light as Dominica does. Only I wasn't sure she would see it the way I did.

HYACINTH—She is angry with the tutor on account of Napoleon. He teaches the boys that——

DOMINICA—Can't you bear him, either, this Napoleon?

HYACINTH—She loathes him!

DOMINICA—Dear, in my sainted husband's library there is a curiosity,—a little French book which proves quite conclusively that Napoleon never lived. I'll send it to you. Read it. It is most comforting. . . . There . . . dearest. . . . So that was your tragic difficulty.

BEATRICE—Yes, you clever, practical darling.

DOMINICA—Poor little tutor! Now he is beginning to interest me. What is to become of him?

BEATRICE—He is packing. Oh, he feels that, after what has happened, he cannot stay on here another moment.

DOMINICA—He is quite right. But are you letting him go like that?

BEATRICE—Well, you see, my dear . . . he is now . . . the poor fellow is now like an exploded cartridge.

DOMINICA—One must be very careful with cartridges. It is just such people who become writers of memoirs, American lecturers or publicists for the opposition party. One cannot be too careful. I have had painful experiences in such matters. Tutors, adjutants. . . . I shall speak to him myself.

BEATRICE—Thank you, you clever darling.

DOMINICA—Had I been here I should have warned you in the first place not to trifle with a tutor.

A tutor near a princess is as dangerous as a lighted match near a tin of gasoline. And, in any case, there was no need for all this haste. Had you waited one day more . . . then I'd have been here. There is an old English proverb which says: "Act in haste and repent at your leisure."

HYACINTH—[*Significantly.*] In England!

DOMINICA—Now then . . . when can I see this tutor? [*The* CHAMBERMAID *enters at right.*]

BEATRICE—At once. Is everything ready?

CHAMBERMAID—Yes, your highness.

BEATRICE—Send Cæsar to me here. [*The* COUNTESS *and* SYMPHOROSA *enter at right.*]

SYMPHOROSA—Everything is ready now, Dominica, dear; and there is a surprise for you in there.

DOMINICA—Nothing will surprise me now, dear Symphorosa.

SYMPHOROSA—This will, I think. Albert is awaiting you in the drawing room.

DOMINICA—Albert? Up this early? On *my* account! You are right, dear. This is a most joyful surprise. I'm coming. [*As she goes.*] Meantime, bring this professor to me here.

BEATRICE—I shall arrange it at once. But I am afraid you will find him difficult.

HYACINTH—And I'll wager that you won't find him difficult at all.

DOMINICA—Karl, I haven't wagered since 1886,

when I bet my sainted husband that I would give birth to a boy.

HYACINTH—And it was a girl?

DOMINICA—Two, Karl, two at a time. Come, Countess. [*She exits at right.* SYMPHOROSA *and the* COUNTESS *follow her.* HYACINTH *and* BEATRICE *look at each other in silence. He smiles triumphantly.*]

BEATRICE—You have a good heart, Karl, and a good head. [*Kisses him on the brow.*] There is but one thing I am still afraid of——

HYACINTH—In heaven's name, what now?

BEATRICE—When she speaks to her son in there . . . won't he have a different opinion about it all?

HYACINTH—There are two reasons why he won't have a different opinion. In the first place, he won't be such a fool as to disagree with his mamma; and in the second place, I mean to be present at the interview. [*Starts to go.*]

BEATRICE—[*Hurries after him.*] Karl, dear . . . wait. . . . I have been very unfair to you. . . . What can I do to make you forgive me?

HYACINTH—[*At the door, right.*] All I ask of you is never to fall on my neck again. To-morrow you will write those words in a copy book one hundred times: "Old brooms sometimes sweep clean." [*He exits.*]

BEATRICE—No manners at all. [CÆSAR *enters at back.*]

BEATRICE—Cæsar! You will go downstairs and ask Dr. Agi if he will be good enough to come up at once and wait in this room. Her highness, the Princess Dominica wishes to speak to him.

CÆSAR—Very good, your highness.

BEATRICE—What are you serving her highness for breakfast?

CÆSAR—Tea, cold salmon, cold beef, cold chicken . . . cold . . .

BEATRICE—Cæsar! Why, that is last night's supper. . . .

CÆSAR—I beg pardon, your highness. It is this morning's breakfast. I had it put on the table at one this morning, and no one has eaten a bite of it yet.

BEATRICE—Have you lost your senses, Cæsar?

CÆSAR—Quite likely, your highness. . . . Another breakfast will be served.

BEATRICE—Why are you so pale?

CÆSAR—I didn't sleep well, your highness. I suffered agonies. Mostly on account of the tea.

BEATRICE—On account of what tea?

CÆSAR—On account of the terrible mistake. Father Hyacinth was served the hot tea and your highness got the cold consommé.

BEATRICE—I am glad I did. I would have fainted away in that horrible moment if I hadn't had that sip of ice-cold soup. It revived me.

CÆSAR—Thank you, your highness. You have taken a great load off my mind.

BEATRICE—You are not to punish the man who made the mistake.

CÆSAR—No, your highness. Perhaps you would wish me to give him a little reward?

BEATRICE—Let us not go to extremes. . . . The professor is to wait here. [*She exits at right.* CÆSAR *goes to the door at left, but it opens and* ALEXANDRA *enters.*]

ALEXANDRA—Has the princess arrived?

CÆSAR—Yes, your highness.

ALEXANDRA—Where is she?

CÆSAR—In there, your highness. [*Points to right.*] I believe she is changing her clothes after her long motor ride.

ALEXANDRA—And what are you doing here?

CÆSAR—I have been told to summon—— [*Stops.*]

ALEXANDRA—To summon whom?

CÆSAR—[*Reluctantly.*] Professor Agi.

ALEXANDRA—[*Sharply.*] What do they want of Professor Agi?

CÆSAR—He is to come up here and wait.

ALEXANDRA—Very good. Send him up. [*She sits.*]

CÆSAR—But . . . if your highness pleases . . . I am to send Mr. Agi up here to wait for——

ALEXANDRA—*Professor* Agi.

CÆSAR—Professor Agi up here to wait for her highness, who wishes to speak with him.

ALEXANDRA—Just do as you were told. Send Professor Agi up.

CÆSAR—Yes, your highness. [*He exits at back. After a brief pause* AGI *enters, dressed for travelling.*]

AGI—Your highness sent for me?

ALEXANDRA—No. But I waited here because I learned that you had been sent for.

AGI—Is there anything your highness wanted?

ALEXANDRA—What sort of costume is that you are wearing?

AGI—A travelling costume.

ALEXANDRA—You are going away?

AGI—Yes. [*There is a pause.*] Is there anything your highness wanted?

ALEXANDRA—And what is to become of the boys?

AGI—I don't know.

ALEXANDRA—Aren't you sorry to leave them?

AGI—Indeed. . . . I am very sorry. [*A pause.*] Is there anything your highness wanted?

ALEXANDRA — Princess Maria Dominica, the mother of the Crown Prince, has come.

AGI—I know.

ALEXANDRA—And do you know why she has come?

AGI—I know that, too.

ALEXANDRA—Well? [*A pause.*] Sit down, please.

AGI—Thank you. [*He does not sit.*]

ALEXANDRA—[*She rises.*] I haven't spoken with the Princess yet. I haven't even seen her yet. Perhaps within the next few minutes we shall meet. And then . . . she will tell me why she has come.

AGI—Yes. [*There is a pause.*]

ALEXANDRA—Is that all you have to say about it?

AGI—Practically.

ALEXANDRA—I don't understand this mocking tone!

AGI—Not mocking, only incredulous. I am not a boy any more, to believe in fairy tales.

ALEXANDRA—[*With significance.*] . . . Boy?

AGI—Yes, your highness, not a boy.

ALEXANDRA—[*Regarding him sternly, reproachfully.*] What *is* this attitude you have assumed toward me?

AGI—One of utmost deference, your highness.

ALEXANDRA—Why this pretense? Have you forgotten what happened last night?

AGI—I have forgotten, your highness.

ALEXANDRA—Have you? And have you also forgotten what I——

AGI—I have forgotten that, too, your highness.

ALEXANDRA—Was it so easy to forget?

AGI—I didn't say that.

ALEXANDRA—If I had known——

AGI—You must have known.

ALEXANDRA—That you would forget?

AGI—I . . . must forget, and your highness must deny it . . . and . . . *he* must not remember it.

ALEXANDRA—He shall remember it, and I don't deny it. But I see that what I gave you was too precious. More precious than you deserve. Perhaps . . . a kingdom.

AGI—That is not so precious. I know of one that was offered in exchange for a horse.

ALEXANDRA—You even insult me! You speak like a sullen child.

AGI—No, your highness . . . what I am saying, what I am doing, my departure to-day . . . these are my answer to your highness' kiss.

ALEXANDRA—I hadn't expected you to utter that word.

AGI—Uttering it doesn't hurt. The kiss itself was much more painful.

ALEXANDRA—[*Cuttingly.*] More painful for you than for me?

AGI—Oh, yes. It made me feel your profound pity for me, and also your utter contempt. It was a supercilious thing to do. It implied that I was not a human being at all . . . that I could be treated . . . like a child or a pet animal.

ALEXANDRA—Is that the way you took it?

AGI—If I hadn't taken it like that——

ALEXANDRA—Then what?

AGI—Then I should be kissing you still.

ALEXANDRA—[*Resentfully.*] I see it was all a stupid mistake on my part.

AGI—It was too much, your highness . . . too much at a time. That is why it was unconvincing.

ALEXANDRA—Unconvincing?

AGI—Yes. For we hadn't reached that stage . . . and yet . . . suddenly you had kissed me. . . . Afterwards . . . I went out into the garden . . . and wandered about . . . for a long time . . . not among the roses . . . but out under the oaks where the morning breeze was unscented and cool. . . . There . . . at daybreak . . . I grew calmer . . . and could weigh and consider. . . . And I felt like a beggar into whose hat someone had tossed a thousand crown note instead of a copper . . . and who must, in all honesty, run after the giver and offer it back.

ALEXANDRA—I am glad to see that you know your place so well.

AGI—It is morning, your highness. The sun is shining.

ALEXANDRA—And not the stars.

AGI—No, no; not the stars.

ALEXANDRA—[*Nervously.*] I am very glad of it.

AGI—And I. Because you are glad.

ALEXANDRA—I am very glad of it. It is better like this.

AGI—We can't make it better. [*There is a brief pause.* HYACINTH *enters at right.* AGI *bows.*]

HYACINTH—Well, my son, at last you are here. The Princess wants to talk to you. Yes, and the Crown Prince, too.

AGI—The Crown Prince?

HYACINTH—He would like to make amends for . . . that unfortunate misunderstanding of yesterday.

AGI—Forgive me, father . . . but I must ask them to excuse me. I am leaving. My box is already on the wagon.

HYACINTH—And you proposed to leave us without farewells?

AGI—I have just said good-bye to her highness.

ALEXANDRA—Yes, and in a most extraordinary way.

HYACINTH—How?

ALEXANDRA—Coldly. Sullenly. As if I had insulted him.

HYACINTH—Well, isn't that interesting? This is the second time he has divined my thoughts. Yes, you did insult him, my child. Certainly you hurt his vanity . . . perhaps also his self-respect . . . with that kindly little kiss. That is what you mean —isn't it, my son?

AGI—Yes, father.

ALEXANDRA—A tragic moment like that . . . and you call it a kindly little kiss!

HYACINTH—[*To* AGI.] You have your athletic habits to thank for this wisdom, this healthy clarity of judgment.

ALEXANDRA—And the things he said yesterday . . . about his life and his death and his immortality. . . . Were they all untrue?

HYACINTH—Don't you see? Sudden anguish seeks expression in the strongest language. That is why common people, for instance, become profane in such moments.

ALEXANDRA—Is that all it meant?

HYACINTH—All? That is a great deal, my daughter, for it manifests a profound sorrow. An exclamation of pain, as it were, in which the words are not important.

ALEXANDRA—Which of his words shall I believe then?

HYACINTH—The ones he leaves unspoken now. [*A brief pause.*] Well, and you, my daughter? Now! Be candid.

ALEXANDRA—I, Hyacinth? . . . If I am to be candid, I believe I love him a little. [*Puts her head on his shoulder.*]

HYACINTH—I myself thought you loved him . . . until you kissed him.

ALEXANDRA—You say that, too? I don't understand any of you. Is there anything the matter with me?

HYACINTH—No, my child.

ALEXANDRA—And you don't believe it was love either?

AGI—No, your highness.

ALEXANDRA—But I——

HYACINTH—You don't understand yourself, my child. It was pity that stirred in you last night. And at half past two it expressed itself in that bitter kiss.

ALEXANDRA—Bitter?

HYACINTH—It wasn't me you kissed, and yet I know it was bitter.

ALEXANDRA—I am very unhappy, Hyacinth. But when you talk to me like this . . . if you would only stay on a day or two longer and keep talking to me like this . . . then I should feel better.

HYACINTH—I'll stay, my child. I'll stay three days more to keep you cheerful; I'll stay four days——

AGI—Permit me to take my leave. [*Bows.*] Your highness. [*Nervously takes leave of* HYACINTH.]

ALEXANDRA—[*Cannot bring herself to let him go like this.*] I admire your calm. Your mastery of yourself. Yet I know you are only pretending.

This isn't what you'd like to do. [*She obstructs* Agi's *way.*]

Agi—Perhaps not, your highness.

Alexandra—That isn't what you'd like to say.

Agi—Perhaps not.

Alexandra—But . . . if you can control yourself so perfectly now, why didn't you last night? [*Angrily.*] That's what I want to know.

Hyacinth—I'll stay a week.

Alexandra—[*More and more hysterically.*] If you can be so calm now, why weren't you calm then? Why did you do what you did? Why? Why? What did you want?

Agi—I don't know. That is the strangest part of what happened last night. I didn't quite know what I wanted.

Alexandra—You didn't know?

Agi—No.

Alexandra—You didn't know, and yet——

Hyacinth—My child . . . be calm . . . I'll stay a fortnight.

Alexandra—[*With growing indignation, unheeding him.*] He didn't know what he wanted . . . yet he dragged me along with him . . . appealed to my sympathy . . . my credulity . . . dragged me and I clung to him . . . ready for anything . . . even my own destruction . . . even if the whole world crumbled to pieces . . . I would have clung to him

. . . and . . . he . . . he—— [ALBERT *enters quietly. She sees him but continues as if he were not there.*] He didn't know what he wanted . . . and didn't care what harm he did . . . as long as he could gratify a momentary impulse . . . he——

ALBERT—[*With mild irony.*] Xara, you misjudge him. He is a free spirit. He is not like us.

ALEXANDRA—[*Unheeding him.*] He only wanted to destroy everything . . . to make a scandal. . . . Yes, he *was* ill-mannered and ignorant——

ALBERT—You are unjust. He is an astronomer.

ALEXANDRA—And now *I* say his conduct was impertinent.

AGI—Your highness!

ALBERT—Don't answer her, Hans! I forbid it, Hans! And if you will permit me . . . Hans . . . I will kiss you, Hans. [*Embraces him and kisses him on the cheek.*]

HYACINTH—Bravo! I leave to-morrow.

AGI—[*Good-humoredly.*] Thanks, your highness. You overwhelm me.

ALBERT—Do you mind?

AGI—Not this one.

ALBERT—Shall I kiss you again?

AGI—Thanks, your kindness, that would be too much. One was just enough. [GEORG *and* ARSEN *enter at back. Each carries a bouquet of flowers in his hand. They pause a moment on the threshold,*

then come down to center, where they stand embarrassed. ALBERT *goes down left.*]

GEORG—Professor—— [*He is too touched to speak; gives* AGI *the flowers. So does* ARSEN.]

AGI—For me? [*Takes them.*]

GEORG—Yes. [*Turns away; wipes the tears from his eyes.* ARSEN *hides his face against* GEORG'S *shoulder.*]

AGI—There, now! Can these be—the Indians? The celebrated Indians? [GEORG *and* ARSEN *turn and embrace him affectionately.*] We must have a happy leavetaking. Not like this. Why, you ought to be delighted. From now on—no more history lessons. Now comes history itself. [*He bows, and exits at back with the boys. There is a pause.*]

ALBERT—Don't be angry, Xara. I owed him that.

ALEXANDRA—Him?

ALBERT—In consolation for that kiss you gave him yesterday. [ALEXANDRA *looks suspiciously at* HYACINTH.]

HYACINTH—Yes . . . yes. It is true.

ALEXANDRA—Well, then . . . I was not to blame?

HYACINTH—No, my child.

ALEXANDRA—And I didn't make an irreparable blunder?

HYACINTH—That is almost impossible for one in your social position.

ALEXANDRA — [*Mournfully.*] And I wasn't a heroine?

HYACINTH—No, my child.

ALEXANDRA—What was I then?

HYACINTH—Don't ask, my child. [*There is a brief pause.*]

ALBERT—[*With ceremonious elegance.*] Alexandra . . . last night you made handsome amends for a blunder of mine. I ask you now to stay at my side through life. And when I am at fault be always as . . . as . . . courageous as you were then. Will you? [*Extends his hand to her.*]

ALEXANDRA—[*Gives him her hand. There is a brief silence.*] Albert . . . it is my duty to be quite candid. If I tell you honestly that at this moment I feel no other sentiment toward you than respect . . . and friendship——

ALBERT—Then I answer you, Xara, that it suffices me now.

ALEXANDRA—[*Wistfully but kindly.*] We haven't contrived a love match, have we?

ALBERT—No. No. Decidedly not. [*With each "no" he shakes her hand.*]

ALEXANDRA—No.

HYACINTH—No.

ALBERT—May I say what we have contrived instead?

ALEXANDRA—Yes.

ALBERT—We have contrived . . . something more beautiful. . . . Love that comes after marriage. The deeper and stronger happiness that . . . that——

HYACINTH—That comes later and endures longer.

ALBERT—Extraordinary that you can always express one's innermost thoughts so neatly. Think of this: Katherine of Württemberg was the happiest wife in the world. And yet hers was one of those compulsory marriages which Napoleon—— [*Looks around*] Napole. . . . But happy, you see, nevertheless.

ALEXANDRA—[*Sighs.*] Nevertheless. [*There is a pause.* DOMINICA *enters.*]

DOMINICA—My dear Alexandra. [*Embraces her.*]

ALEXANDRA—Welcome, Aunt Dominica. [*Kisses her hand with profound reverence.*]

DOMINICA—Tell me, my dears, hasn't the professor come yet?

HYACINTH—Oh, yes; he was here.

DOMINICA—Well?

HYACINTH—And he has gone away. [*A long silence.*]

DOMINICA—What does this silence mean? Why don't you speak? [*Another silence during which* BEATRICE *enters.*]

BEATRICE—[*Regards the silent group; terror*

seizes her; she cries out.] Merciful heaven! Has something happened again?

HYACINTH—The professor was kissed.

BEATRICE—[*In alarm.*] By whom?

HYACINTH—By Albert.

BEATRICE—[*With a sigh of relief.*] Oh!

DOMINICA—What does this mean? One after another, you are all kissing this person. What sort of man is he?

HYACINTH—A most admirable man.

BEATRICE—Did you kiss him, too?

HYACINTH—Yesterday. But I shall kiss him again before he goes away.

DOMINICA—There appears to be no further need for me to talk to him. The young man has had his reward.

ALBERT—It seems to me, mother, that a man who had performed such a great service for the family deserved it. Not only from the bride but also from the bridegroom. [DOMINICA *nods assent.*]

HYACINTH—Especially from the bridegroom.

DOMINICA—Quite right.

BEATRICE—If he hasn't gone yet . . . perhaps I ought to kiss him too . . . what?

DOMINICA—I fancy he has had enough. But I shall kiss . . . your daughter.

ALEXANDRA—Dear Aunt . . . if you deem me worthy. . . .

DOMINICA—Entirely, my dear daughter, with only this suggestion: That you remember now and again that your sainted father used to call you his swan. Think often of what it means to be a swan . . . gliding proudly . . . majestically . . . where the moon gleams on the mirror of the water . . . gliding always in that purple radiance . . . and never coming ashore. For when a swan walks, my daughter . . . when she waddles up the bank . . . then she painfully resembles another bird.

ALEXANDRA—[*Softly ironical at her own expense.*] A goose?

DOMINICA—Almost, my girl. Natural history teaches that the swan is nothing but an aristocratic duck. That is why she must stay on the mirror of the water. She is a bird, but she may never fly. She knows a song, but she may never sing until she is about to die. Yes, dear, glide on the water . . . head high . . . stately silence . . . and the song —never! [*There is a pause.*]

CÆSAR—[*Entering at right.*] Breakfast is served. [HYACINTH *proffers* DOMINICA *his arm. Next goes* BEATRICE *alone. Then* ALBERT *and* ALEXANDRA *arm in arm. They exit.* CÆSAR *strides majestically after them as*]

THE CURTAIN FALLS

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